Considerations on France

by Joseph de Maistre, 1796

ENGLISH AUTOMATED TRANSLATION

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By Joseph de Maistre

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Preface to the English Edition

Joseph de Maistre's *Considerations on France* is not merely a political treatise; it is a work of "political theology" that views the French Revolution through a supernatural lens. Writing from exile while the guillotine was still fresh in the European imagination, Maistre rejected the Enlightenment idea that the Revolution was a rational pursuit of liberty. Instead, he argued it was a metaphysical phenomenon—a divine punishment visited upon a decadent nation.

Maistre's most striking contribution is his assertion of the "demonic" character of the era. He posits that the Revolution was so vast and its actors so mediocre that it could only be explained by the intervention of a higher power. As he famously observes in Chapter IV:

"*There is a satanic quality to the French Revolution that distinguishes it from everything we have ever seen or anything we are ever likely to see in the future*."

This sentiment was echoed by his contemporary, the Abbé Barruel, who identified the intellectual roots of this eruption in the cult of the *philosophes*. In his *History of the Clergy*, Barruel provides a vivid portrait of the spiritual desolation that Maistre viewed as the catalyst for divine judgment:

"Seventy years consumed in blasphemies, sophisms, sarcasms, falsehoods, and a virulent hatred of Christ and his saints, had placed Voltaire at the head of all the impious sects of the age... His pen was the sword of Mahommed in the west... The triumph of Voltaire was the triumph of all the schools the declared enemies of Jesus Christ... and France now groans under the load of impiety and profligacy, without having the power or resolution to shake it off."

Where Barruel saw a conspiracy of men and ideas, Maistre saw the hand of Providence using that very "load of impiety" to consume itself. Central to this thesis is the paradox of the Revolutionaries as "*passive instruments*" of the divine. While a secular observer sees Robespierre and his ilk as masters of French destiny, Maistre perceives them merely as the "scourge" in the hand of God—functional tools granted temporary power to dismantle a decayed order.

By allowing the wicked to destroy the wicked, Providence ensured that the Revolution acted as a grim "clean-up crew" that cleared the path for a purified restoration. As Maistre concludes:

"*We cannot repeat it too often: it is not men who lead the Revolution, it is the Revolution that uses men*."

For Maistre, this purification went beyond mere politics. He believed in "*reversibility*"—the mystical idea that the suffering of the innocent could atone for the sins of the guilty. The death of the 'Most Christian King' Louis XVI was viewed not as a mere political execution, but as a sacrificial act of expiation necessary for the eventual restoration of the French soul.

In this automated translation of the 1821 edition—the year of Maistre's death—the reader encounters the "Prophet of the Past" at his most visceral. His words serve as a haunting reminder of his

core conviction: that a society which attempts to build itself solely upon human reason, divorced from the divine and the traditional, invites a collapse that is nothing short of hellish.

Note on the Translation

This edition is an AI-assisted English translation of Joseph de Maistre's *Considérations sur la France*. Because no full e-text was available in either language, a French e-text was first created (provided separately) and then converted to English via automated translation to ensure this seminal work remains available to the modern digital reader.

CHAPTER I

On Revolutions

We are all attached to the throne of the Supreme Being by a flexible chain which restrains us without enslaving us.

The most admirable aspect of the universal order of things is the action of free beings under the divine hand. Freely enslaved, they operate simultaneously by volition and by necessity: they truly perform that which they desire, yet without the power to derange the general plans. Each of these beings occupies the center of a sphere of activity, the diameter of which varies according to the will of the Eternal Geometer, who knows how to extend, restrict, check, or direct the will without altering its essential nature.

In the works of man, all is as impoverished as its author; the visions are narrow, the means rigid, the springs inflexible, the movements labored, and the results monotonous. In divine works, the riches of the infinite are displayed openly even in the smallest element: His power operates as if in play: in His hands all is supple, nothing resists Him; for Him, all is a means, even the obstacle itself: and the irregularities produced by the operation of free agents are eventually brought into alignment with the general order.

If one imagines a watch, of which all the springs continually vary in strength, weight, dimension, form, and position, and which nevertheless shows the hour invariably, one will form some idea of the action of free beings relative to the plans of the Creator.

In the political and moral world, as in the physical world, there is a common order, and there are exceptions to that order. In the ordinary course of things, we observe a sequence of effects produced by the same causes; but at certain epochs, we witness actions suspended, causes paralyzed, and new effects arising.

A miracle is an effect produced by a divine or superhuman cause, which suspends or contradicts an ordinary cause. If, in the heart of winter, a man

should command a tree, before a thousand witnesses, to cover itself suddenly with leaves and fruit, and if the tree should obey, everyone would cry out "miracle!" and bow before the thaumaturge. But the French Revolution, and all that passes in Europe at this moment, is quite as marvelous, in its kind, as the instantaneous fructification of a tree in the month of January; yet men, instead of admiring, look elsewhere or speak unreasonably.

In the physical order, where man does not enter as a cause, he is willing to admire that which he does not comprehend; but in the sphere of his own activity, where he feels himself to be a free cause, his pride leads him easily to perceive disorder wherever his action is suspended or disturbed.

Certain measures within the power of man regularly produce certain effects in the ordinary course of things; if he misses his mark, he knows why, or believes he knows; he recognizes the obstacles, he appreciates them, and nothing astonishes him.

But in times of revolution, the chain which binds man is abruptly shortened, his action diminishes, and his means deceive him. Then, swept away by an unknown force, he grows vexed against it, and instead of kissing the hand that constrains him, he ignores or insults it.

"I understand nothing of it"—this is the great catchphrase of the day. This word is very sensible if it leads us back to the First Cause which gives at this moment so grand a spectacle to men; it is a folly if it expresses only a sterile vexation or dejection.

"How then," (it is cried on all sides), "do the most guilty men in the universe triumph over the universe! A frightful regicide enjoys all the success that those who committed it could expect! Monarchy is benumbed throughout Europe! Its enemies find allies even upon thrones! Everything succeeds for the wicked! The most gigantic projects are executed on their part without difficulty, while the good party is wretched and ridiculous in everything it undertakes! Opinion pursues fidelity throughout all Europe! The foremost statesmen are invariably mistaken! The greatest generals are humiliated! etc."

Doubtless; for the first condition of a decreed revolution is that everything which could have prevented it does not exist, and that nothing succeeds for those who wish to forestall it. But never is order more visible, never is Providence more palpable, than when the superior action substitutes itself for that of man and acts all alone: this is what we see at this moment.

What is most striking in the French Revolution is this sweeping force which bends all obstacles. Its whirlwind carries away like a light straw everything that human strength knew how to oppose to it: no one has thwarted its march with impunity. Purity of motives may have illustrated the obstacle, but that is all; and this jealous force, marching invariably to its goal, rejects equally a Charette, a Dumouriez, and a Drouet.

It has been remarked, with great reason, that the French Revolution leads men more than men lead it. This observation is of the greatest accuracy; and although one may apply it more or less to all great revolutions, nonetheless it has never been more striking than at this epoch.

The very scoundrels who appear to lead the revolution enter into it only as simple instruments; and as soon as they have the pretension to dominate it, they fall ignobly. Those who established the Republic did so without wanting to and without knowing what they were doing; they were led to it by events: a prior project would not have succeeded.

Never did Robespierre, Collot, or Barère think of establishing the revolutionary government and the Reign of Terror; they were led to it insensibly by circumstances, and never will anything similar be seen again. These men, excessively mediocre, exercised over a guilty nation the most frightful despotism of which history makes mention, and surely they were the men of the kingdom most astonished at their own power.

But at the very moment when these detestable tyrants had filled the measure of crimes necessary for this phase of the revolution, a breath overthrew them. This gigantic power which made France and Europe tremble did not hold against the first attack; and as there was to be nothing great, nothing august in a revolution entirely criminal, Providence willed

that the first blow should be struck by *septembriseurs*, so that even justice should appear infamous.

Often one has been astonished that men more than mediocre have judged the French Revolution better than men of the first talent; that they believed in it strongly, when consummated politicians did not yet believe in it at all. It is because this persuasion was one of the pieces of the revolution, which could succeed only by the extent and the energy of the revolutionary spirit, or, if it be permitted to express oneself thus, by *faith* in the revolution. Thus, men without genius and without knowledge have very well driven what they called the revolutionary chariot; they have dared everything without fear of counter-revolution; they have always marched forward without looking behind them; and everything succeeded for them because they were but the instruments of a force that knew more than they. They made no mistakes in their revolutionary career for the reason that Vaucanson's flute-player never played a false note.

The revolutionary torrent has taken successively different directions; and the most prominent men in the revolution have acquired the species of power and celebrity which could belong to them only by following the course of the moment: as soon as they wished to thwart it, or only to deviate from it by isolating themselves or working too much for themselves, they disappeared from the scene.

Behold that Mirabeau who was so marked in the revolution: at bottom, he was the king of the marketplace. By the crimes he committed, and by the books he caused to be written, he seconded the popular movement: he placed himself in the wake of a mass already set in motion and pushed it in the determined direction; his power never extended further: he shared with another hero of the revolution the power to agitate the multitude without having that of dominating it—which forms the true stamp of mediocrity in political troubles. Factious men less brilliant, and in effect more clever and powerful than he, used his influence for their own profit. He thundered at the tribune, and he was their dupe. He said in dying that if he had lived, he would have reassembled the scattered pieces of the Monarchy; and when he had wished, in the moment of his greatest influence, to aim only for a ministry, his subordinates had repulsed him like a child.

Finally, the more one examines the personages who appear the most active in the revolution, the more one finds in them something passive and mechanical. One cannot repeat it too often: it is not men who lead the revolution; it is the revolution that employs men. It is very well said when it is said that "it goes all by itself." This phrase signifies that never had the Divinity shown Himself in so clear a manner in any human event. If He employs the most vile instruments, it is because He punishes in order to regenerate.

CHAPTER II.

Conjectures upon the Designs of Providence in the French Revolution.

Every Nation, like unto every individual, hath received a mission which it is bound to fulfill. France exerciseth over Europe a veritable magistracy, which it would be futile to contest, and of which she hath made the most guilty abuse. She stood, pre-eminently, at the head of the religious system; nor was it without reason that her King was styled *Most Christian*: Bossuet hath said nothing too much upon this head. Now, as she hath employed her influence to contradict her vocation and to demoralize Europe, one must not be astonished that she is being led back to her path by means the most terrible.

For a long season, there hath not been witnessed a punishment so appalling, inflicted upon so vast a multitude of the guilty. There are innocents, doubtless, among the unfortunate; but there are far fewer than is commonly imagined. All those who laboured to disenthral the people from their religious belief; all those who opposed metaphysical sophisms to the laws of property; all those who cried: *Strike, provided we gain thereby*; all those who laid hands upon the fundamental laws of the State; all those who counselled, approved, or favoured the violent measures employed against the King—all these willed the Revolution; and all who willed it have been, most justly, its victims, even according to our narrowest views.

One groaneth to see illustrious savants fall beneath the axe of Robespierre. Humanly speaking, we cannot regret them too much; but Divine Justice hath not the slightest respect for geometers or physicists. Too many French men of science were the principal authors of the Revolution; too many loved and favoured it so long as it struck down, like the staff of Tarquin, only the dominant heads. They said, like so many others: *It is impossible that a great revolution can be effected without bringing calamities in its train.* But when a philosopher consoleth himself for these calamities in view of the results; when he saith in his heart: *Let a hundred thousand murders pass, provided we be free*; if Providence answereth him: *I*

accept thy approbation, but thou shalt be of the number, where is the injustice? Should we judge otherwise in our own tribunals?

Details would be odious; but how few Frenchmen are there, among those called *innocent victims*, to whom their conscience might not say:

Behold the fruit of all your errors past,

And know the blows which your own hands have cast.

Our ideas of good and evil, of the innocent and the guilty, are too often altered by our prejudices. We declare guilty and infamous two men who fight with a blade three inches long; but if the steel be three feet, the combat becometh honourable. We brand him who stealeth a centime from his friend's pocket; if he take only his wife, it is nothing. All brilliant crimes, which suppose a development of great or amiable qualities—all those, above all, which are honoured by success—we pardon, if indeed we do not transform them into virtues; whereas the brilliant qualities surrounding the guilty man serve but to blacken him in the eyes of true Justice, for whom the greatest crime is the abuse of her gifts.

Every man hath certain duties to fulfill, and the extent of these duties is relative to his civil position and the measure of his means. It is far from being the case that the same action is equally criminal on the part of two given men. To remain within our subject, an act which was but an error or a stroke of folly on the part of an obscure man, suddenly clothed with unlimited power, might be a heinous crime on the part of a Bishop or a Duke and Peer of the Realm.

Finally, there are actions excusable, even laudable according to human views, which are in essence infinitely criminal. If one saith to us, for example: *I embraced the French Revolution in good faith, through a pure love of liberty and my country; I believed in my soul and conscience that it would bring about the reform of abuses and the public happiness*; we have nothing to answer. But that Eye, for whom all hearts are transparent, seeth the guilty fibre; He discovereth, in a ridiculous quarrel, in a small wounding of pride, in a base or criminal passion, the prime motive of those resolutions which men would fain illustrate in the eyes of the world; and for Him, the

lie of hypocrisy grafted upon treason is a crime the more. But let us speak of the Nation in general.

One of the greatest crimes that can be committed is, beyond doubt, an attack upon Sovereignty, none having consequences more terrible. If Sovereignty resideth in a single head, and that head falleth a victim to the assault, the crime increaseth in atrocity. But if this Sovereign hath merited his fate by no crime; if his very virtues have armed against him the hand of the guilty, the crime hath no longer a name. By these traits do we recognize the death of Louis XVI. But what it is important to remark is, that never did a greater crime have more accomplices. The death of Charles I had far fewer, and yet it was possible to cast reproaches at him which Louis XVI in no wise merited. Nevertheless, Charles was given proofs of the most tender and courageous interest; even the executioner, who did but obey, dared not make himself known. In France, Louis XVI marched to his death in the midst of sixty thousand armed men, who had not a single musket-shot for Santerre; not a voice was raised for the unfortunate Monarch, and the provinces were as mute as the capital. *One would have exposed oneself*, it was said. Frenchmen! if you find this reason good, talk no more of your courage, or admit that you employ it very ill.

The indifference of the army was no less remarkable. It served the executioners of Louis XVI far better than it had served the King himself, for it had betrayed him. Not the slightest testimony of discontent was seen on its part. In fine, never did a greater crime belong (in truth, with a host of gradations) to a greater number of the guilty.

It is necessary to make another important observation: that every attack committed against sovereignty, in the name of the Nation, is always more or less a national crime; for it is always more or less the fault of the Nation if a faction hath been able to commit the crime in its name. Thus, all Frenchmen, doubtless, did not *will* the death of Louis XVI; but the immense majority of the people *willed*, for more than two years, all the follies, all the injustices, all the outrages which led to the catastrophe of the 21st of January.

Now, all national crimes against sovereignty are punished without delay and in a terrible manner; it is a law which hath never suffered an exception.

A few days after the execution of Louis XVI, someone wrote in the *Mercure Universel*: *Perhaps it ought not to have come to this; but since our legislators have taken the event upon their responsibility, let us rally round them; let us extinguish all hatreds, and let there be no more question of it.* Admirable! It ought perhaps not to have been necessary to murder the King; but since the deed is done, let us speak of it no more, and let us all be good friends. O madness! Shakespeare knew a little more when he said: *The life of every individual is precious to himself; but the life upon which so many lives depend, that of sovereigns, is precious to all. Doth a crime cause royal majesty to disappear? In the place it occupied, a frightful gulf is formed, and all that surrounds it is plunged therein.* Every drop of Louis XVI's blood will cost France torrents; four millions of Frenchmen, perhaps, will pay with their heads for the great national crime of an anti-religious and anti-social insurrection, crowned by a regicide.

Where are the first National Guards, the first soldiers, the first generals, who took the oath to the Nation? Where are the chiefs, the idols of that first assembly, so guilty, for whom the epithet *Constituent* shall be an eternal epigram? Where is Mirabeau? Where is Bailly, with his *beau jour*? Where is Thouret, who invented the word *expropriate*? Where is Osselin, the rapporteur of the first law which proscribed the emigrants? One might name by the thousands the active instruments of the Revolution who have perished by a violent death.

It is here again that we may admire order in disorder; for it remaineth evident, upon the least reflection, that the great criminals of the Revolution could only fall beneath the blows of their accomplices. If force alone had operated what is called the *Counter-Revolution*, and replaced the King upon the throne, there would have been no means of doing justice. The greatest misfortune that could befall a man of delicacy would be to have to judge the assassin of his father, of his kinsman, of his friend, or merely the usurper of his property. Now, this is precisely what would have happened in the case of a counter-revolution as it was then understood; for the superior judges, by the very nature of things, would almost all have belonged to the offended class; and justice, even when it did but punish, would have had the air of taking vengeance.

Moreover, legitimate authority always observeth a certain moderation in the punishment of crimes which have a multitude of accomplices. When it sendeth five or six guilty men to their death for the same crime, it is a massacre; if it passeth certain bounds, it becometh odious. In fine, great crimes require, unhappily, great punishments; and in this kind, it is easy to overstep the limits when it concerneth crimes of *Lèse-Majesté*, and when flattery turneth executioner. Humanity hath not yet forgiven the ancient French legislation for the frightful punishment of Damiens. What, then, would the French magistrates have done with three or four hundred *Damiens*, and all the monsters who covered France? Would the sacred sword of justice have fallen without ceasing, like the guillotine of Robespierre? Would they have summoned to Paris all the executioners of the Kingdom and all the horses of the artillery to tear men asunder? Would they have dissolved in vast cauldrons lead and pitch, to pour upon limbs torn by red-hot pincers? Moreover, how to characterize the different crimes? How to graduate the punishments? And above all, how to punish without laws? *A few great criminals would have been chosen*, it will be said, *and all the rest would have obtained pardon.* This is precisely what Providence did not want. As She can do all She willeth, She ignoreth those pardons produced by the impotence to punish. It was necessary that the great purification should be accomplished, and that eyes should be struck; it was necessary that the French metal, cleared of its sour and impure dross, should arrive cleaner and more malleable into the hands of the future King. Doubtless, Providence hath no need to punish in time to justify Her ways; but, at this epoch, She placeth Herself within our reach, and punisheth like a human tribunal.

There have been nations literally condemned to death like guilty individuals, and we know why. If it entered into the designs of God to reveal His plans to us regarding the French Revolution, we should read the chastisement of the French like the decree of a parliament. But what should we know more? Is not this chastisement visible? Have we not seen France dishonoured by more than a hundred thousand murders? The entire soil of this beautiful Kingdom covered with scaffolds? And this unhappy land drenched with the blood of its children by judicial massacres, while inhuman tyrants lavished it abroad for the support of a cruel war,

maintained for their own interest? Never did the most sanguinary despot play with the lives of men with such insolence, and never did a passive people present itself to the slaughter with more complaisance. Sword and fire, cold and famine, privations, sufferings of every kind—nothing disgusteth it with its punishment; all that is devoted must fulfill its lot; no disobedience will be seen until the judgment be accomplished.

And yet in this war so cruel, so disastrous, what interesting points of view! And how one passeth by turns from sadness to admiration! Let us transport ourselves to the most terrible epoch of the Revolution; let us suppose that, under the government of the infernal Committee, the army, by a sudden metamorphosis, becometh all at once *Royalist*; let us suppose that it convoketh on its side its primary assemblies, and that it freely nameth the most enlightened and estimable men to trace the route it must hold in this difficult occasion. Let us suppose, finally, that one of these elect of the army riseth and saith:

"Brave and faithful warriors, there are circumstances where all human wisdom is reduced to choosing between different evils. It is hard, doubtless, to fight for the Committee of Public Safety; but there would be something more fatal still, and that would be to turn our arms against it. The moment the army meddleth in politics, the State will be dissolved; and the enemies of France, profiting by this moment of dissolution, will penetrate and divide her. It is not for this moment that we must act, but for the sequence of time: it is a question, above all, of maintaining the integrity of France, and we can only do so by fighting for the government, whatever it may be; for in this manner France, despite her internal rendings, will preserve her military strength and her exterior influence. To take it rightly, it is not for the government that we fight, but for France and for the future King, who will owe to us an Empire greater, perhaps, than the Revolution found. It is therefore a duty for us to overcome the repugnance which maketh us waver. Our contemporaries perhaps will calumniate our conduct; but posterity will do it justice."

This man would have spoken as a great philosopher. Well! this chimerical hypothesis the army hath realized without knowing what it did; and terror on one side, immorality and extravagance on the other, have done

precisely what a consummate and almost prophetic wisdom would have dictated to the army.

If one reflecteth well upon it, one will see that the revolutionary movement once established, France and the Monarchy could only be saved by Jacobinism.

The King never had an ally; and it is a fact sufficiently evident, so that there is no imprudence in stating it, that the coalition sought the dismemberment of France. Now, how to resist the coalition? By what supernatural means to break the effort of a conjured Europe? The infernal genius of Robespierre alone could operate this prodigy. The revolutionary government hardened the souls of the French by tempering them in blood; it exasperated the spirit of the soldiers, and doubled their strength by a ferocious despair and a contempt for life which savoured of rage. The horror of the scaffolds, driving the citizen to the frontiers, fed the exterior force as fast as it annihilated even the least resistance within. All lives, all riches, all powers were in the hands of the revolutionary power; and this monster of might, drunk with blood and success—a frightful phenomenon never seen before, and which doubtless will never be seen again—was at once a terrible punishment for the French and the only means of saving France.

What did the Royalists ask, when they asked for a counter-revolution such as they imagined—that is to say, made abruptly and by force? They asked for the conquest of France; they asked, therefore, for its division, the annihilation of its influence, and the debasement of its King—that is to say, massacres for three centuries, perhaps; the infallible consequence of such a rupture of equilibrium. But our descendants, who will trouble themselves very little with our sufferings, and who will dance upon our graves, will laugh at our present ignorance; they will easily console themselves for the excesses we have seen, which will have preserved the integrity of the *most beautiful kingdom after that of Heaven.*

All the monsters which the Revolution hath brought forth have laboured, according to appearances, only for Royalty. Through them, the luster of victories hath forced the admiration of the universe, and surrounded the French name with a glory of which the crimes of the Revolution have not

been able to strip it entirely; through them, the King will remount the throne with all his luster and all his power—perhaps even with an increase of power. And who knoweth if, instead of miserably offering some of his provinces to obtain the right to reign over the others, he will not perhaps restore some, with the pride of a power which giveth what it could retain? Certainly, less probable things have been seen to happen.

This same idea, that everything is done for the advantage of the French Monarchy, persuadeth me that any Royalist revolution is impossible before the peace; for the restoration of Royalty would suddenly relax all the springs of the State. The black magic which is operating at this moment would disappear like a mist before the sun. Goodness, clemency, justice—all the soft and peaceful virtues—would reappear all at once, and bring with them a certain general sweetness in characters, a certain cheerfulness entirely opposed to the somber rigour of the revolutionary power. No more requisitions, no more palliated thefts, no more violences. Would the generals, preceded by the white flag, call the inhabitants of invaded countries *reverts* who were defending themselves legitimately? And would they enjoin them not to stir, under pain of being shot as rebels? These horrors, very useful to the future King, could not, however, be employed by him; he would therefore have only *human* means. He would be on a par with his enemies; and what would happen in this moment of suspension which necessarily accompanieth the passage from one government to another? I know not. I feel well that the great conquests of the French seem to place the integrity of the Kingdom under cover (I believe I touch here the very reason for these conquests). However, it appeareth always more advantageous to France and to the Monarchy that peace—and a peace glorious for the French—should be made by the Republic; and that at the moment the King remounteth his throne, a profound peace may ward off from him every kind of danger.

On the other hand, it is visible that a sudden revolution, far from curing the people, would have confirmed their errors; that they would never have forgiven the power which had snatched away their chimeras. As it was of the *people* properly so called, or of the multitude, that the factious had need to overturn France, it is clear that, in general, they had to spare them, and that the great vexations had to fall first upon the affluent class. It was

necessary, therefore, that the usurping power should weigh long upon the people to disgust them with it. They had seen only the Revolution; it was necessary they should feel, that they should savour, so to speak, its bitter consequences. Perhaps, at the moment I write, it is not yet enough.

Reaction, moreover, having to be equal to action, do not hasten, impatient men, and reflect that the very length of the evils announceth to you a *counter-revolution* of which you have no idea. Calm your resentments, above all do not complain of Kings, and ask for no other miracles than those you see. What! you pretend that foreign powers should fight philosophically to raise the throne of France, and without any hope of indemnity? But you wish, then, that man should not be man; you ask for the impossible. You would consent, you will say perhaps, to the dismemberment of France *to bring back order*; but do you know what *order* is? It is what will be seen in ten years, perhaps sooner, perhaps later. From whom do you hold, moreover, the right to stipulate for the King, for the French Monarchy, and for your posterity? When blind factions decree the *indivisibility* of the republic, see only Providence who decreeth that of the Kingdom.

Let us now cast a glance upon the unheard-of persecution excited against the national worship and its ministers: it is one of the most interesting *faces* of the Revolution.

One could not deny that the priesthood in France had need of being regenerated; and although I am very far from adopting the vulgar declamations upon the clergy, it appeareth to me no less incontestable that riches, luxury, and the general inclination of minds toward laxity had caused this great body to decline; that it was often possible to find beneath the rochet a knight instead of an apostle; and that, finally, in the times immediately preceding the Revolution, the clergy had descended, almost as much as the army, from the place it had occupied in general opinion.

The first blow struck at the Church was the invasion of its property; the second was the constitutional oath: and these two tyrannical operations began the regeneration. The oath sifted the priests, if one may be permitted so to express it. All who took it, with some few exceptions which may be

passed over, saw themselves led by degrees into the abyss of crime and opprobrium; opinion hath but one voice upon these apostates.

The faithful priests, recommended to this same opinion by a first act of firmness, illustrated themselves still more by the intrepidity with which they knew how to brave sufferings and even death itself for the defense of their faith. The massacre of the Carmes is comparable to all that ecclesiastical history offereth of the most beautiful in this kind.

The tyranny which drove them from their country by thousands, against all justice and all decency, was doubtless the most revolting thing imaginable; but upon this point, as upon all others, the crimes of the tyrants of France became the instruments of Providence. It was probably necessary that the French priests should be shown to foreign nations; they have lived among Protestant nations, and this rapprochement hath greatly diminished hatreds and prejudices. The considerable emigration of the clergy, and particularly of the French bishops, to England, appeareth to me, above all, a remarkable epoch. Surely, *words of peace* will have been pronounced! Surely, projects of reconciliation will have been formed during this extraordinary reunion! If they had done no more than desire together, it would be much. If ever Christians draw together, as everything inviteth them to do, it seemeth that the *motion* must start from the Church of England. Presbyterianism was a French work, and consequently an exaggerated work. We are too far removed from the followers of a worship too unsubstantial: there is no way of our understanding one another. But the Anglican Church, which toucheth us with one hand, toucheth with the other those whom we cannot touch; and although, from a certain point of view, she be a mark for the blows of both parties, and presenteth the somewhat ridiculous spectacle of a rebel who preacheth obedience, yet she is very precious in other aspects, and may be considered as one of those chemical intermediates capable of bringing together elements unassociable by their nature.

The property of the clergy being dissipated, no base motive can for a long time give it new members; so that all circumstances concur to raise this body. There is reason to believe, moreover, that the contemplation of the work with which it seemeth charged will give it that degree of exaltation

which raiseth man above himself, and putteth him in a state to produce great things.

Join to these circumstances the fermentation of minds in certain countries of Europe, the exalted ideas of some remarkable men, and that kind of inquietude which affecteth religious characters, especially in Protestant lands, and urgeth them into extraordinary paths.

See at the same time the storm which growleth over Italy; Rome threatened at the same time as Geneva by the power which willeth no worship, and the national supremacy of religion abolished in Holland by a decree of the National Convention. If Providence eraseth, it is doubtless in order to write.

I observe, moreover, that when great beliefs have been established in the world, they have been favoured by great conquests, by the formation of great sovereignties: the reason for this is seen.

In fine, what must happen, at the epoch in which we live, from these extraordinary combinations which have deceived all human prudence? In truth, one would be tempted to believe that the political revolution is but a secondary object of the great plan which unfoldeth before us with a terrible majesty.

I spoke, in beginning, of that magistracy which France exerciseth over the rest of Europe. Providence, who always proportioneth the means to the end, and who giveth to nations, as to individuals, the organs necessary to the accomplishment of their destination, hath precisely given to the French nation two instruments—and, so to speak, two arms—with which she moveth the world: her language and the spirit of proselytism which formeth the essence of her character; so that she hath constantly the need and the power to influence men.

The power, I had almost said the Monarchy, of the French language is visible: one can, at most, pretend to doubt it. As for the spirit of proselytism, it is known as the sun; from the milliner to the philosopher, it is the salient part of the national character.

This proselytism passeth commonly for a ridicule, and really it often meriteth that name, especially by its forms; at bottom, however, it is a function.

Now, it is an eternal law of the moral world that every function produceth a duty. The Gallican Church was a cornerstone of the Catholic, or, to speak better, the Christian edifice; for, in truth, there is but one edifice. The churches inimical to the universal church subsist, nevertheless, only through her, though perhaps they little suspect it, like those parasitic plants, those sterile mistletoes which live only upon the substance of the tree which supporteth them, and which they impoverish.

Hence it cometh that the reaction between opposing powers being always equal to the action, the greatest efforts of the *Goddess Reason* against Christianity were made in France: the enemy was attacking the citadel.

The clergy of France must not, therefore, fall asleep; they have a thousand reasons to believe they are called to a great mission; and the same conjectures which allow them to perceive why they have suffered, allow them also to believe themselves destined for an essential work.

In a word, if there be not a moral revolution in Europe; if the religious spirit be not reinforced in this part of the world, the social bond is dissolved. One can divine nothing, and must expect everything. But if there be a happy change upon this point, either there is no longer any analogy, any induction, any art of conjecture, or it is France who is called to produce it.

It is this, above all, which maketh me think that the French Revolution is a great epoch, and that its consequences, in every kind, will be felt far beyond the time of its explosion and the limits of its hearth.

If one envisageth it in its political relations, one is confirmed in the same opinion. How much the powers of Europe have been mistaken upon France! How many vain things have they meditated! O you who believe yourselves independent, because you have no judges upon the earth, never say: *This suiteth me*; DISCITE JUSTITIAM MONITI! What hand, at once severe and paternal, was crushing France with every imaginable scourge, and

supporting the Empire by supernatural means, by turning all the efforts of her enemies against themselves? Let no one come to speak to us of *assignats*, of the force of numbers, etc.; for the possibility of *assignats* and of the force of numbers is precisely out of nature. Moreover, it is neither by paper-money nor by the advantage of numbers that the winds lead the ships of the French and repel those of their enemies; that winter maketh for them bridges of ice at the moment they have need of them; that the sovereigns who hinder them die at the appointed time; that they invade Italy without cannons; and that phalanxes, reputed the bravest in the universe, throw down their arms at equal numbers and pass under the yoke.

Read the fine reflections of M. Dumas upon the present war; you will see perfectly why, but not at all how, it hath taken the character we see. We must always go back to the Committee of Public Safety, which was a miracle, and whose spirit still winneth battles.

In fine, the punishment of the French departeth from all ordinary rules, and the protection accorded to France departeth from them also: but these two prodigies united multiply one another, and present one of the most astonishing spectacles that the human eye hath ever contemplated.

As events unfold, one will see other reasons and more admirable relations. I see, moreover, but a part of those which a more piercing sight might discover even at this moment.

The horrible effusion of human blood, occasioned by this great commotion, is a terrible means; nevertheless, it is a means as much as a punishment, and it may give rise to interesting reflections.

CHAPTER III.

On the Violent Destruction of the Human Species.

That King of Dahomey, in the remote interior of Africa, was unhappily not so far from the mark when he remarked to an Englishman some years ago: *"God hath made this world for war; all kingdoms, great and small, have practiced it in all ages, though upon diverse principles."* History, alas! proveth that war is, in a certain sense, the habitual state of mankind; which is to say, that human blood must flow without ceasing upon this globe, now here, now there; and that peace, for every nation, is but a respite.

One may cite the closing of the Temple of Janus under Augustus; one may point to a single year of the martial reign of Charlemagne (the year 790) wherein he did not wage war. One may even recall a brief epoch following the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, and another equally fleeting after that of Carlowitz in 1699, when no war existed, not only in all Europe, but even in the whole of the known world. Yet these epochs are but monuments of rarity. Moreover, who can truly know what transpires across the entire globe at any given moment?

The century now drawing to a close began, for France, with a cruel war, concluded only in 1714 by the Treaty of Rastadt. In 1719, France declared war upon Spain; the Treaty of Paris ended it in 1727. The election of the King of Poland rekindled the flame in 1733; peace followed in 1736. Four years later, the terrible War of the Austrian Succession was ignited and raged without interruption until 1748. Eight years of peace had begun to heal the wounds of eight years of war when the ambition of England compelled France to take up arms. The Seven Years' War is but too well known. After fifteen years of repose, the American Revolution drew France once more into a conflict whereof no human wisdom could foresee the consequences. Peace was signed in 1782; seven years later, the Revolution commenced; it endureth still; and perhaps at this very hour, it hath cost France three millions of men.

Thus, considering France alone, we find forty years of war out of ninety-six. If other nations have been more fortunate, others yet have fared far worse. But it sufficeth not to behold a single point in time or space; one must cast a rapid glance over that long succession of massacres which staineth every page of history. War will be seen to rage without intermission, like a continuous fever marked by frightful paroxysms. I entreat the reader to follow this tableau from the decline of the Roman Republic.

Marius, in a single battle, exterminates two hundred thousand Cimbri and Teutons. Mithridates orders the throat-cutting of eighty thousand Romans; Sulla slaughters ninety thousand of his men in a combat in Boeotia, where he himself loses ten thousand. Soon follow the civil wars and proscriptions. Caesar alone caused a million men to perish upon the field of battle (before him, Alexander had enjoyed this fatal honour). Augustus closes the Temple of Janus for an instant, but he opens it for centuries by establishing an elective empire. A few good princes allow the State to breathe, but war never ceases; and under the reign of the *good* Titus, six hundred thousand men perish at the Siege of Jerusalem. The destruction wrought by Roman arms is truly appalling. The Lower Empire presents but a series of butcheries. Starting with Constantine, what wars and what battles! Licinius loses twenty thousand men at Cibalis, thirty-four thousand at Adrianople, and an hundred thousand at Chrysopolis.

The northern nations begin to stir. Franks, Goths, Huns, Lombards, Alans, Vandals, and their ilk, attack the Empire and tear it asunder. Attila puts Europe to fire and sword. The French slay more than two hundred thousand of his men near Châlons; and the Goths, the following year, inflict an even more considerable loss. In less than a century, Rome is taken and sacked thrice; and in a sedition at Constantinople, forty thousand persons are slaughtered. The Goths seize Milan and kill three hundred thousand inhabitants. Totila massacres all the dwellers of Tivoli and ninety thousand men at the sack of Rome.

Mahomet appears; the sword and the Alcoran traverse two-thirds of the globe. The Saracens run from the Euphrates to the Guadalquivir. They utterly destroy the immense city of Syracuse; they lose thirty thousand men

near Constantinople in a single naval engagement; and Pelayo slays twenty thousand in a land battle. These losses were as nothing to the Saracens; but the torrent encounters the genius of the Franks on the plains of Tours, where the son of the first Pepin, amidst three hundred thousand corpses, attaches to his name the terrible epithet which distinguishes him yet.

Islam, carried into Spain, finds there an indomitable rival. Never, perhaps, did the world behold more glory, more grandeur, and more carnage. The struggle of Christians and Muslims in Spain is a combat of eight hundred years. Several expeditions, and even several battles, cost twenty, thirty, forty, and up to eighty thousand lives.

Charlemagne ascends the throne and combats for half a century. Each year he decrees upon which part of Europe he shall visit death. Present everywhere and everywhere victorious, he crushes iron nations as Caesar crushed the effeminate men of Asia. The Normans begin that long series of ravages and cruelties which make us shudder even now. The immense heritage of Charlemagne is rent: ambition covers it with blood, and the name of the Franks disappears at the Battle of Fontenoy. All Italy is sacked by the Saracens, while Normans, Danes, and Hungarians ravage France, Holland, England, Germany, and Greece.

The barbarian nations finally establish themselves and are tamed. This vein yields no more blood; another opens instantly: the Crusades begin. All Europe precipitates itself upon Asia; the number of victims is no longer counted but by myriads. Genghis Khan and his sons subjugate and ravage the globe from China to Bohemia. The French, who had crossed themselves against the Muslims, do so against the Heretics: the cruel Albigensian war. The Battle of Bouvines, where thirty thousand men lose their lives. Five years later, eighty thousand Saracens perish at the Siege of Damietta. The Guelphs and Ghibellines commence that struggle which was so long to ensanguine Italy. The torch of civil war is lit in England. The Sicilian Vespers. Under the reigns of Edward and Philip of Valois, France and England clash more violently than ever, creating a new era of carnage. The massacre of the Jews; the Battle of Poitiers; the Battle of Nicopolis: the victor falls beneath the blows of Tamerlane, who repeats the career of Genghis Khan. The Duke of Burgundy procures the assassination of the

Duke of Orléans, beginning the bloody rivalry of the two houses. The Battle of Agincourt. The Hussites put a great part of Germany to fire and sword. Mahomet II reigns and combats for thirty years.

England, repulsed within her borders, tears herself with her own hands; the Houses of York and Lancaster bathe her in blood. The heiress of Burgundy carries her states into the House of Austria; and in this marriage contract, it is written that men shall slaughter one another for three centuries, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. The discovery of the New World: 'tis the death warrant of three millions of Indians. Charles V and Francis I appear upon the world's stage: every page of their history is red with human gore. The reign of Soliman; the Battle of Mohács; the Siege of Vienna; the Siege of Malta.

But it is from the shadow of a cloister that there emerges one of the greatest scourges of mankind. Luther appears; Calvin follows him. The Peasants' War; the Thirty Years' War; the civil wars of France; the massacre of the Netherlands; the massacre of Ireland; the massacre of the Cévennes; the day of St. Bartholomew; the murder of Henry III, of Henry IV, of Mary Stuart, of Charles I; and in our own days, finally, the French Revolution, which springs from the same source.

I shall push this ghastly tableau no further: our century and that which preceded it are but too well known. Whether one ascends to the cradle of nations or descends to our own time; whether one examines peoples in every possible condition, from the state of barbarism to that of the most refined civilisation; one finds always war. By this cause, which is the principal one, and by all those which join it, the effusion of human blood is never suspended in the universe: at times it is less intense over a larger surface, and at times more abundant upon a smaller area; so that it remains nearly constant.

But from time to time, there occur extraordinary events which augment it prodigiously, such as the Punic Wars, the Triumvirates, the victories of Caesar, the irruption of the barbarians, the Crusades, the religious wars, the Spanish Succession, the French Revolution. If one possessed tables of massacres as one hath meteorological tables, who knows if one might not discover the law thereof after a few centuries of observation? Buffon hath

well proved that a great portion of animals are destined to die a violent death. He might, according to appearances, have extended his demonstration to man; but one may rely upon the facts.

There is reason to doubt, moreover, whether this violent destruction be, in general, as great an evil as is believed: at the very least, it is one of those evils which enter into an order of things where all is violent and *against nature*, and which produce compensations. First, when the human soul hath lost its resilience through effeminacy, incredulity, and the gangrenous vices that follow the excess of civilisation, it can only be retempered in blood. It is by no means easy to explain why war produces different effects according to different circumstances. What is seen clearly enough is that mankind may be considered as a tree which an invisible hand prunes without respite, and which often gains by the operation. In truth, if one strikes the trunk, or if one polls the head like a willow, the tree may perish: but who knows the limits for the human tree? What we do know is that extreme carnage is often allied with extreme population, as was seen especially in the ancient Greek republics, and in Spain under the dominion of the Arabs.

Commonplaces upon war signify nothing: one need not be very clever to know that the more men are killed, the fewer remain at that moment; just as it is true that the more branches one cuts, the fewer remain upon the tree; but it is the *consequences* of the operation that must be considered. Now, following the same comparison, one may observe that the skillful gardener directs his pruning less toward absolute vegetation than toward the *fructification* of the tree: it is fruit, and not wood and leaves, that he demands of the plant. Now, the true fruits of human nature—the arts, the sciences, great enterprises, high conceptions, manly virtues—depend above all upon the state of war. It is known that nations never reach the highest point of grandeur of which they are capable, save after long and bloody wars. Thus, the radiant point for the Greeks was the terrible epoch of the Peloponnesian War; the age of Augustus followed immediately upon the civil war and the proscriptions; the French genius was roughed out by the League and polished by the Fronde: all the great men of the age of Queen Anne were born amidst political commotions. In a word, one might say that blood is the manure of that plant which we call *genius*.

I know not if we understand ourselves well when we say that *the arts are friends of peace*. One should at least explain and circumscribe the proposition; for I see nothing less peaceful than the ages of Alexander and Pericles, of Augustus, of Leo X and Francis I, of Louis XIV and Queen Anne.

Would it be possible that the effusion of human blood had not a great cause and great effects? Let it be reflected upon: history and fable, the discoveries of modern physiology, and ancient traditions, unite to furnish materials for these meditations. It would be no more shameful to grope upon this point than upon a thousand others more foreign to man.

Let us thunder, however, against war, and endeavour to disgust Sovereigns with it; but let us not indulge in the dreams of Condorcet—that philosopher so dear to the Revolution, who employed his life in preparing the misfortune of the "present perfection," benignly bequeathing the generation to our nephews. There is but one means of compressing the scourge of war, and that is to compress the disorders which bring about this terrible purification.

In the Greek tragedy of *Orestes*, Helen, one of the personages of the play, is snatched by the gods from the just resentment of the Greeks, and placed in heaven beside her two brothers, to be with them a sign of salvation to mariners. Apollo appears to justify this strange apotheosis. *The beauty of Helen*, says he, *was but an instrument of which the gods made use to set the Greeks and Trojans at loggerheads, and to make their blood flow, in order to staunch upon the earth the iniquity of men who had become too numerous.*

Apollo spoke very well. It is men who assemble the clouds, and they complain afterwards of the tempests.

'Tis the wrath of kings that arms the earth; > 'Tis the wrath of heaven that arms the kings.

I feel well that, in all these considerations, we are continually assailed by the wearying picture of the innocent perishing with the guilty. But, without plunging into this question which touches upon all that is most profound, one may consider it solely in its relation to the universal dogma, as ancient

as the world, of the *reversibility of the sufferings of innocence for the benefit of the guilty*.

It was from this dogma, me-seems, that the ancients derived the usage of sacrifices which they practiced throughout the universe, and which they judged useful not only to the living, but also to the dead: a typical usage which habit makes us behold without astonishment, but whose root is no less difficult to reach. Those acts of self-devotion (*dévouements*), so famous in antiquity, belonged also to the same dogma. Decius had the *faith* that the sacrifice of his life would be accepted by the Divinity, and that he could balance all the evils that threatened his country.

Christianity hath come to consecrate this dogma, which is infinitely natural to man, although it appears difficult to arrive at by reasoning. Thus, there may have been in the heart of Louis XVI, in that of the celestial Elisabeth, such a movement, such an acceptance capable of saving France.

It is sometimes asked what purpose is served by those terrible austerities practiced by certain religious orders, which are also acts of devotion; one might as well ask what purpose Christianity serves, since it rests entirely upon this same enlarged dogma of innocence paying for crime. The authority which approves these orders chooses certain men and isolates them from the world to make of them *conductors*.

There is naught but violence in the universe; but we are spoiled by modern philosophy, which hath said that *all is well*, whereas evil hath defiled everything, and, in a very true sense, *all is ill*, since nothing is in its place. The tonic note of the system of our creation having been lowered, all others have lowered proportionally, according to the rules of harmony. *All beings groan* and tend, with effort and pain, towards another order of things.

The spectators of great human calamities are led especially to these sad meditations; but let us beware of losing courage: there is no punishment which does not purify; there is no disorder which ETERNAL LOVE does not turn against the principle of evil. It is sweet, amidst the general overturning, to presage the plans of the Divinity. Never shall we see the whole during our journey, and often we shall be mistaken; but in all

possible sciences, except the exact sciences, are we not reduced to conjecture? And if our conjectures are plausible; if they have analogy on their side; if they rest upon universal ideas; if, above all, they are consoling and proper to make us better, what do they lack? If they are not true, they are good; or rather, since they are good, are they not true?

After having envisaged the French Revolution from a purely moral point of view, I shall turn my conjectures upon politics, without forgetting, however, the principal object of my work.

CHAPTER IV.

Can the French Republic Endure?

It were better to pose the question thus: Can the Republic exist? Men assume it to be so, but this is to proceed with undue haste; the preliminary question appears most justly founded, for Nature and History unite to establish that a great, indivisible Republic is a thing impossible. A small knot of republicans, immured within the walls of a city, may doubtless hold millions of subjects in thrall: such was the case of Rome. But there cannot exist a great and free nation under a republican government. The matter is so self-evident that theory might well dispense with experience; yet experience, which decides all questions in politics as in physics, is here in perfect accord with theory.

What has been told the French to induce them to believe in a Republic of twenty-four million souls? Two things only: first, that nothing prevents us from seeing that which has never been seen; and second, that the discovery of the representative system renders possible for us that which was not so for our predecessors. Let us examine the force of these two arguments.

If we were told that a die, cast an hundred million times, had never presented, upon coming to rest, any but five numbers—1, 2, 3, 4, and 5—could we believe that the 6 was to be found upon one of its faces? No, certainly; it would be demonstrated to us, as if we had seen it, that one of the six faces is blank, or that one of the numbers is repeated.

Very well! Let us survey History; there we shall see that which is called Fortune, casting the die without ceasing for four thousand years. Has she ever brought forth a GREAT REPUBLIC? No. Therefore, that number was not upon the die.

On the Representative System

As for the representative system, which is believed capable of resolving the problem, I feel myself drawn into a digression for which I crave

indulgence.

Let us first remark that this system is by no means a modern discovery, but a production—or rather, a piece—of feudal government, when it had reached that point of maturity and equilibrium which rendered it, all things considered, the most perfect thing the universe has beheld. The royal authority, having formed the commons, summoned them to the national assemblies; they could appear there only through their mandatories: hence the representative system.

It would require a profound incapacity to penetrate what Bacon called the *interiora rerum*, to imagine that men could have risen by prior reasoning to such institutions, or that they could be the fruit of a mere deliberation. National representation is not peculiar to England; it is found in all the monarchies of Europe. But it is alive in Great Britain; elsewhere, it is dead or it sleeps.

If, then, by the term national representation, one understands a *certain* number of representatives sent by *certain* men, from *certain* towns or boroughs, by virtue of an ancient concession of the sovereign, let us not dispute over words: such a government exists, and it is that of England.

But if it is intended that the *entire* people be represented, and that *every* citizen be eligible to give or receive these mandates—with a few exceptions, physically and morally inevitable—and if one further pretends to join to such an order of things the abolition of all hereditary distinction and function, this representation is a thing never before seen, and which shall never succeed.

America is cited to us; I know nothing so wearisome as the praises lavished upon that babe in swaddling clothes: let him grow.

The Arithmetic of Sovereignty

The commission recently charged with presenting a mode for the renewal of the Third, estimates the number of Frenchmen at thirty millions. Let us grant this number. Each year, by the terms of the Constitution, two hundred and fifty persons exiting the legislative body are to be replaced by

two hundred and fifty others. It follows that if the fifteen million males of this population were immortal, eligible for representation, and appointed in turn, each Frenchman would come to exercise the national sovereignty once every sixty thousand years.

But as men do not cease to die from time to time in such an interval; and as, moreover, elections may fall again upon the same heads, imagination is appalled by the prodigious number of Sovereigns condemned to die without ever having reigned.

Rousseau maintained that the national will cannot be delegated; one is free to say yes or no, and to dispute for a thousand years upon these questions of the schools. But what is certain is that the representative system excludes the exercise of sovereignty, especially in the French system, where the rights of the people are limited to naming those who name. It is not possible to imagine a legislation better calculated to annihilate the rights of the people.

The Corruption of the Source

Let us rise to the height which befits an intelligent being, and from this elevated point, consider the source of this government. Evil has nothing in common with existence; it cannot create, for its force is purely negative. Evil is the schism of being; it is not true.

Now, that which distinguishes the French Revolution, and which makes it a unique event in history, is that it is radically bad; no element of good there relieves the eye of the observer: it is the highest degree of corruption known; it is pure impurity.

In what page of history shall one find so great a quantity of vices acting at once upon the same theatre? What an appalling assembly of baseness and cruelty! What profound immorality! What a total casting off of all shame!

The youth of liberty possesses characters so striking that it is impossible to mistake them. At such an epoch, love of country is a religion, and respect for the laws a superstition. If one contrasts this picture with that offered by France, how can one believe in the duration of a liberty which begins with

gangrene? When one hears these pretended republicans speak of liberty and virtue, one seems to behold a faded courtesan, playing the airs of a virgin with a modesty of rouge.

Is it, then, from this bloody mire that a durable government is to emerge? Let no one object to us the ferocious and licentious manners of barbarian peoples who have nevertheless become what we now see. Barbarous ignorance has presided, doubtless, over many political establishments; but learned barbarism, systematic atrocity, calculated corruption, and above all, irreligion, have never produced anything. Lustiness leads to maturity; rottenness leads to nothing.

The French nation does not *will* this government; she *suffers* it. The Republic rests only upon two columns which have nothing of reality: she rests entirely upon two negations. One feels, in all that its defenders say of the stability of the government, not the conviction of reason, but the dream of desire.

Let us pass to the great anathema which weighs upon the Republic.

CHAPTER V

Of the French Revolution considered in its Anti-Religious Character. — Digression upon Christianity.

There is in the French Revolution a satanic character which distinguishes it from everything we have seen, and perhaps from everything we shall ever see.

Recall those grand sessions! The harangue of Robespierre against the priesthood, the solemn apostasy of the clergy, the profanation of sacred vessels, the inauguration of the Goddess of Reason, and that multitude of unheard-of spectacles wherein the provinces strove to outdo the capital; all this transcends the ordinary circle of crime and appears to belong to another world.

Even now, though the Revolution has greatly retrograded—though the most flagrant excesses have vanished—its principles endure. Have not the *legislators* (to employ their own term) pronounced a word unique in history: *The Nation salaries no form of worship*? There are men of our age who have seemed to me, at certain moments, to rise even unto a hatred of the Divinity; yet such a frightful *tour de force* is not requisite to render the most strenuous constituent efforts sterile. The mere oblivion of the Great Being—I say not contempt—is an irrevocable anathema upon those human works which it blights. All conceivable institutions rest upon a religious idea or they do but pass away. They are strong and durable only in proportion as they are divinized, if one may so express it. Not only is human reason (or what is called *philosophy*, without men knowing what they say) unable to supply those foundations termed *superstitious* (likewise without men knowing what they say), but philosophy is, on the contrary, an essentially disorganized force.

In a word, man cannot represent the Creator save by placing himself in relation with Him. Insensate that we are! If we desire a mirror to reflect the image of the sun, do we turn it toward the earth?

These reflections address themselves to all: to the believer as to the sceptic. It is a fact I advance, and not a thesis. Whether one mocks religious ideas or venerates them matters not; they nonetheless form, true or false, the sole basis of all enduring institutions.

Rousseau, perhaps the man of all the world who most egregiously erred, nevertheless stumbled upon this observation without wishing to draw its consequences. *The Judaic law*, he says, *ever subsisting; that of the son of Ishmael, which for ten centuries has ruled half the world, still proclaim today the great men who dictated them... proud philosophy or the blind spirit of party sees in them only lucky impostors.*

It remained only for him to conclude, instead of prating to us of *that great and powerful genius which presides over durable establishments*—as if such poetry explained anything!

When one reflects upon facts attested by the whole of history; when one perceives that in the chain of human establishments, from those grand institutions which mark the epochs of the world down to the smallest social organization—from the Empire to the Confraternity—all possess a divine basis; and that human power, whenever it has isolated itself, has been able to give its works only a false and fleeting existence: what shall we think of the new French edifice and the power which produced it? For my part, I shall never believe in the fecundity of nothingness.

On the Divine Principle in Institutions

It would be a curious thing to examine our European institutions in succession and to demonstrate how they are all Christianized; how Religion, mingling with all things, animates and sustains all. Human passions may soil, or even denature, the primitive creations; if the principle be divine, that suffices to endow them with a prodigious duration.

Amidst a thousand examples, one may cite the military orders. Assuredly, one does no wrong to their members in affirming that the religious object is perhaps not the first to occupy their minds: no matter, they subsist, and this duration is a prodigy. How many superficial spirits mock that strange amalgam of the monk and the soldier! It would be better

to marvel at that hidden force by which these orders have pierced the centuries, compressed formidable powers, and resisted shocks that still astonish us in history. Now, this force is the Name upon which these institutions rest; for nothing is save by Him who Is.

In the midst of the general upheaval we witness, the lack of education especially arrests the anxious eye of the friends of order. More than once they have been heard to say that the Jesuits must be re-established. I do not here discuss the merit of that Order; but such a wish does not imply very profound reflection. Would one not say that Saint Ignatius is there, ready to serve our designs? If the Order be destroyed, some lay-brother in the kitchen might perhaps re-establish it by the same spirit that created it; but all the Sovereigns of the universe would not succeed therein.

The Challenge to the Masters of the Earth

There is a divine law as certain, as palpable, as the laws of motion. Whenever a man puts himself, according to his strength, in relation with the Creator and produces any institution whatever in the name of the Divinity—whatever be his individual weakness, his ignorance, his poverty—he participates in some manner in the Omnipotence of which he has made himself the instrument.

I entreat every attentive reader to look around him; even in the smallest objects, he will find the demonstration of these great truths. It is not necessary to go back to the son of Ishmael, to Lycurgus, or to Moses; a popular festival or a rustic dance suffices for the observer. He will see in certain Protestant countries gatherings which have no longer any apparent cause, but which belong to Catholic customs absolutely forgotten. These festivals possess in themselves nothing moral, nothing respectable: no matter; they hold, however remotely, to religious ideas; that is enough to perpetuate them. Three centuries have been unable to efface them.

But you, masters of the earth! Princes, Kings, Emperors! Try only to bring the people to a certain place on a marked day of each year TO DANCE. I ask little of you, but I dare solemnly to defy you to succeed;

whereas the humblest missionary will succeed, and will be obeyed two thousand years after his death.

Beside this picture, place that of the masters of France, whom an unheard-of revolution has invested with all powers, and who cannot organize a simple festival. They lavish gold, they summon all the arts to their aid, and the citizen remains at home, or repairs to the call only to laugh at the organizers. Listen to the spite of impotence! Listen to the memorable words of one of these *deputies of the people* in 1796: *"What then! Shall men foreign to our manners have succeeded in establishing ridiculous festivals for unknown events... and the men who overthrew the Bastille and the Throne cannot succeed in preserving, by national festivals, the memory of the events which immortalize our revolution?"*

O delirium! O depth of human weakness! Legislators, meditate upon this great confession; it teaches you what you are and what you can do.

The Final Conflict

I am so persuaded of the truths I defend that, when I consider the general enfeeblement of moral principles, the divergence of opinions, and the immensity of our needs, it seems to me that every true philosopher must choose between two hypotheses: either that a new religion is about to be formed, or that Christianity will be rejuvenated in some extraordinary manner.

The present GENERATION is witness to one of the greatest spectacles that ever occupied the human eye: it is the fight to the death between Christianity and *Philosophism*. The lists are open, the two enemies are grappled, and the universe looks on.

For eighteen centuries Christianity has reigned over the most enlightened portion of the globe. It was born on the day that days were born. No institution in the universe can be opposed to it. Let them show us another religion founded upon miraculous facts and revealing incomprehensible dogmas, believed for eighteen centuries by the first men of their time, from Origen to Pascal, despite the last efforts of an enemy sect which has not ceased to roar from Celsus to Condorcet.

Christianity has been preached by the ignorant and believed by the learned, and in this it resembles nothing known. It has emerged from every ordeal. It has resisted everything: scaffolds, triumphs, daggers, the night of the Middle Ages, and the broad daylight of the centuries of Leo X and Louis XIV. An omnipotent Emperor—Julian—exhausted against it all the resources of his genius; he delivered it to ridicule, he impoverished the priesthood; everything was useless: the Galilean triumphed over Julian the philosopher.

Today, finally, the experiment is repeated under circumstances even more favorable. The sceptre is broken, the priests are slaughtered or despoiled, the temples are closed or opened only to the bacchanals of an unbridled populace. *Philosophism* has no more complaints to make; all human chances are in its favor. If it be the victor, it may seat itself proudly upon a prostrate cross.

But if Christianity emerges from this terrible ordeal more pure and more vigorous—if the Christian Hercules, strong in his strength alone, lifts the *son of the earth* and crushes him in his arms—patuit Deus.

Frenchmen! Make way for the Most Christian King; bear him yourselves upon his ancient throne; raise again his oriflamme, and let his gold, traveling from pole to pole, bear everywhere the triumphal device:

CHRIST COMMANDS, HE REIGNS, HE CONQUERS!

CHAPTER VI.

Of Divine Influence in Political Constitutions.

Man may modify all things within the sphere of his activity, yet he createth nothing: such is his law, in the physical as in the moral world.

A man may certes plant a seed, rear a tree, perfect it by grafting, and prune it in a hundred fashions; but never hath he conceived himself possessed of the power to *make* a tree. How, then, hath he imagined himself capable of making a *constitution*? Is it by the light of experience? Let us examine what she hath to teach us.

All free constitutions known unto the universe have been formed in one of two manners. Ofttimes they have, so to speak, *germinated* in an imperceptible way, through the concurrence of a multitude of those circumstances which we style fortuitous; and sometimes they possess a solitary author who appeareth as a phenomenon and commandeth obedience.

In both suppositions, behold the characters by which God warneth us of our own frailty and of the right He hath reserved unto Himself in the formation of governments:

1. No constitution resulteth from deliberation. The rights of the people are never written, or at least the constitutive acts or written fundamental laws are never more than declaratory titles of anterior rights, of which naught can be said save that they exist because they exist.

2. God, not having deemed it fitting to employ supernatural means in this order, hath at least circumscribed human action to such a degree that in the formation of constitutions, circumstances are everything, and men are but circumstances. Quite commonly, even, it is while pursuing one end that they obtain another, as we have witnessed in the English constitution.

3. The rights of the *people*, properly so-called, proceed oft-times from the concession of Sovereigns, and in such cases may be historically established; but the rights of the sovereign and of the aristocracy—at least the essential, constitutive, and *radical* rights, if one may so venture to speak—have neither date nor author.

4. Even the concessions of the Sovereign have always been preceded by a state of affairs which necessitated them and which depended not upon him.

5. Albeit written laws are never more than declarations of anterior rights, yet it is far from the truth that everything which can be written is so; there resideth always in every constitution something which *cannot be written*, and which must be left in a dark and venerable cloud, under pain of overthrowing the State.

6. The more one writeth, the weaker the institution. The reason is manifest. Laws are but declarations of rights, and rights are only declared when they are assailed; so that a multiplicity of written constitutional laws proveth only a multiplicity of shocks and the peril of destruction. Behold why the most vigorous institution of profane antiquity was that of Lacedaemon, wherein nothing was committed to writing.

7. No nation can bestow liberty upon itself if it possesseth it not already. When it beginneth to reflect upon itself, its laws are already made. Human influence extendeth not beyond the development of existing rights which were unacknowledged or contested. If rash men overstep these limits by temerarious reforms, the nation loseth what it had, without attaining what it desireth. Hence ariseth the necessity of innovating but rarely, and always with measure and trepidation.

8. When Providence hath decreed the more rapid formation of a political constitution, there appeareth a man invested with an indefinable power: he speaketh, and he is obeyed. But these marvelous men belong, perchance, only to the ancient world and

to the youth of nations. Be that as it may, here is the distinctive character of these legislators *par excellence*: they are kings, or eminently noble; in this regard, there is, and can be, no exception. It was in this particular that the institution of Solon failed, the most fragile of antiquity.

9. These legislators themselves, with their extraordinary power, do naught but assemble pre-existing elements in the customs and character of peoples; but this gathering, this rapid formation which partaketh of creation, is executed only in the name of the Divinity. Politics and religion are fused together; one scarce distinguisheth the legislator from the priest; and his public institutions consist principally of religious ceremonies and observances.

10. Liberty, in one sense, was always a gift of Kings; for all free nations were constituted by Kings. This is the general rule, and the exceptions which might be cited would return to the rule were they but discussed.

11. Never hath there existed a free nation which did not possess, in its natural constitution, germs of liberty as ancient as itself; and never did a nation effectively attempt to develop, by its written fundamental laws, rights other than those existing in its natural constitution.

12. A mere assembly of men cannot constitute a nation. Such an enterprise exceedeth in folly what the *Bedlams* of the universe might bring forth of the most absurd and extravagant. To prove this proposition in detail, after what I have said, would be, methinks, to fail in respect to those who know, and to do too much honor to those who know not.

13. I have spoken of a principal character of true legislators; here is another, most remarkable: they are never what one calleth *scholars*; they write not; they act by instinct and impulse more than by reasoning, and possess no other instrument for action

than a certain moral force which bendeth wills as the wind bendeth the harvest.

Between theoretical politics and constituent legislation, there existeth the same difference as between poetics and poetry. The illustrious Montesquieu is to Lycurgus, in the general scale of minds, what Batteux is to Homer or to Racine.

Nay, more: these two talents are positively mutually exclusive, as was seen by the example of Locke, who stumbled grievously when he took it into his head to give laws to the Americans. I have seen a great amateur of the republic lamenting in earnest that the French had not perceived in the works of Hume the piece entitled: *Plan of a Perfect Republic*. — *O caecas hominum mentes!* If you see an ordinary man of good sense, who hath never given any outward sign of superiority, you cannot yet affirm that he could not be a legislator. But as for Bacon, Locke, Montesquieu, etc., say *no* without hesitation; for the talent they have proven demonstrateat that they possess not the other.

The application of these principles to the French constitution suggesteth itself naturally; but it is well to view it from a particular vantage. The greatest enemies of the French Revolution must frankly concede that the *Commission of Eleven* which produced the latest constitution hath, by all appearances, more wit than its offspring, and hath done perhaps all that it could do. It disposed of rebellious materials which permitted it not to follow principles; and the mere division of powers, though they be divided only by a wall, is nonetheless a fine victory won over the prejudices of the moment.

But we treat only of the intrinsic merit of the constitution. It entereth not into my design to seek out the particular defects which assure us it cannot endure; moreover, all hath been said upon that point. I shall merely indicate the theoretical error which served as the basis of this construction, and which hath misled the French since the first instant of their revolution.

The Constitution of 1795, like its elders, is made for *man*. Now, there is no such thing as *man* in the world. I have seen, in my time, Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, etc.; I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, *that one may be a Persian*; but as for *man*, I declare never to have met him in my life; if he existeth, it is certainly without my knowledge.

Is there a single country in the universe where one might not find a Council of Five Hundred, a Council of Ancients, and five Directors? This constitution may be presented to all human associations, from China even unto Geneva. But a constitution made for all nations is made for none: it is a pure abstraction, a scholastic work made to exercise the mind according to an ideal hypothesis, and which must be addressed to *man* in the imaginary spaces wherein he dwelleth.

What is a constitution? Is it not the solution of the following problem?

Given the population, the manners, the religion, the geographical situation, the political relations, the wealth, the good and the bad qualities of a certain nation, to find the laws which suit it.

Now, this problem is not even approached in the Constitution of 1795, which hath thought only of *man*. Thus, every imaginable reason uniteth to establish that the divine seal is not upon this work. It is but a schoolboy's theme.

Even now, how many signs of destruction are already manifest!

CHAPTER VII.

On the Tokens of Nullity in the French Government.

The Legislator is the image of the Creator; he does not labor in perpetuity. He brings forth, and then he rests. Every true legislation hath its Sabbath, and intermittence is its distinctive character; so that Ovid uttered a truth of the first order when he said:

Quod caret alterna requie durabile non est. (That which lacks alternate rest is not enduring.)

Were perfection the inheritance of human nature, each legislator would speak but once. Yet, though all our works be imperfect, and though the Sovereign be compelled to aid crumbling institutions with new edicts, human legislation nevertheless approaches its Divine Model by that very intermittence of which I spake but now. Its repose honors it as much as its original action: the more it acts, the more its work is human—which is to say, fragile.

Cast your eyes upon the labors of the three National Assemblies of France; what a prodigious multitude of laws! From the first of July, 1789, until the month of October, 1791, the National Assembly enacted..... 2,557

The Legislative Assembly, in eleven months and a half..... 1,712

The National Convention, from the first day of the Republic until the 4th Brumaire, Year IV, in fifty-seven months..... 11,210

TOTAL: 15,479

I doubt whether the three races of the Kings of France ever brought forth a collection of such magnitude. When one reflects upon this infinite number of laws, one experiences, in succession, two very different sentiments: the first is admiration, or at the very least, astonishment. One marvels, with Mr. Burke, that this nation, whose levity is proverbial, should have produced such obstinate laborers. The edifice of these laws is an Atlantic work, the very aspect of which dizzies the mind. But astonishment is suddenly

transmuted into pity when one considers the nullity of these laws; one sees therein nothing but children slaughtering one another to raise a great edifice of cards.

Why so many laws? It is because there is no Legislator.

What have these so-called legislators done these six years? Nothing; for to destroy is not to make.

One cannot weary of contemplating the incredible spectacle of a nation giving itself three constitutions in five years. No true legislator ever gropes; he says *fiat* after his fashion, and the machine moves. Despite the various efforts of these three assemblies, everything has gone from bad to worse, since the assent of the Nation has constantly and increasingly failed the work of the legislators.

Certainly, the Constitution of 1791 was a magnificent monument of folly; yet it must be confessed, it had inflamed the French. It was with a sincere heart, however foolishly, that the majority of the Nation swore fealty to *the Nation, the Law, and the King*. The French became so infatuated with it that, long after it had perished, it was a common discourse among them that to return to the true Monarchy, one must pass through the Constitution of 1791. This was to say, in essence, that to return from Asia to Europe, one must pass by the Moon; but I speak only of the fact.

The Constitution of Condorcet was never put to the proof, and was not worth the trouble. That which was preferred to it, the work of a few cut-throats, pleased their own kind; and that phalanx, thanks to the Revolution, is not small in France. So that, all things considered, the constitution which has counted the fewest adherents is the one of today. In the primary assemblies which accepted it (as the governors claim), many members wrote naively: *Accepted for want of something better.* This is indeed the general disposition of the Nation: she has submitted through lassitude, through despair of finding better. In the excess of the evils which overwhelmed her, she believed she might breathe under this cice (this mockery).

It is a common error to believe that one can learn the trade of a "constituent," and that men, on the day they think of it, can say to other

men: *"Build us a government,"* as one says to a workman, *"Build us a steam-pump or a stocking-loom."*

Yet there is a truth as certain in its kind as a mathematical proposition: no great institution results from a deliberation. Human works are fragile in proportion to the number of men who meddle in them, and to the apparatus of science and *a priori* reasoning employed therein.

A written constitution, such as that which now governs the French, is but an automaton, possessing only the external forms of life. Man, by his own powers, is at most a Vaucanson; to be Prometheus, he must ascend to Heaven. For the legislator cannot make himself obeyed either by force or by reasoning.

Experience is now complete. It is a lack of attention to say the French Constitution "marches"; one mistakes the Constitution for the Government. The latter, which is a highly advanced despotism, marches only too well; but the Constitution exists only upon paper. It is observed or violated according to the interests of the governors; the people are counted for naught; and the outrages their masters address to them, under the forms of respect, are well suited to cure them of their errors.

On Sovereignty and Dignity

The life of a government is as real as the life of a man; one feels it, or rather, one sees it. I adjure all Frenchmen of conscience to ask themselves whether they do not require a certain violence of mind to give their representatives the title of *legislators*. Does this title of etiquette not cause them a slight effort, similar to that which they felt under the *Ancien Régime* when they were pleased to call the son of a King’s secretary "Count" or "Marquis"?

All honor comes from God, said old Homer. He spoke as Saint Paul did, literally, though without having pillaged him. What is certain is that it does not depend upon man to communicate that indefinable character called dignity. To Sovereignty alone belongs honor *par excellence*; it is from her, as from a vast reservoir, that honor is derived—with number, weight, and measure—unto orders and individuals.

I have remarked that when a member of the legislature spoke of his RANK in a public writing, the journals mocked him; for in truth, there is no *rank* in France, but only power, which depends solely upon force. The people see in a deputy only the seven-hundred-and-fiftieth part of the power to do great evil. A deputy is not respected because he is a deputy, but because he is respectable. This "salary," which a vain neologism calls an indemnity, seems to me a prejudice against French representation. The Englishman, free by law and independent by fortune, who comes to London to represent the Nation at his own expense, has something imposing about him. But these French "legislators," who levy five or six million *livres* upon the Nation to make its laws; these "factors" of decrees, who exercise national sovereignty for eight myriagrams of wheat per day—these men, in truth, make little impression upon the mind. When one asks what they are worth, the imagination cannot help but evaluate them in grain.

In England, those two magic letters, M.P., attached to the most obscure name, exalt it suddenly. In France, a man who sought a seat as a deputy to secure a disproportionate marriage would likely make a very poor calculation.

Every representative, every instrument of a false sovereignty, can excite only curiosity or terror.

On Military Success and the American Example

Let us not be deceived: it is the conquests of the French which have created the illusion of their government’s duration. The brilliance of military success dazzles even good minds, who do not perceive how foreign such success is to the stability of a Republic.

Nations have conquered under every possible government. The French will always succeed in war under a firm hand that has the wit to despise them while praising them, and to hurl them at the enemy like cannonballs, promising them epitaphs in the gazettes. It is Robespierre who still wins the battles; it is his iron despotism that leads the French to slaughter and to victory.

I hear it said: *"The Republic is victorious; therefore it will endure."* Were I forced to prophesy, I should rather say: "The war makes it live; therefore peace will make it die."

One might cite America; but I have answered this in advance. America had a King, but did not see him; she possessed the democratic element of her mother country; her colonists were born amidst republican troubles. They built upon the plan of the three powers of their ancestors; they did not make a *tabula rasa* like the French.

Moreover, all that is truly new in their constitution—all that results from common deliberation—is the most fragile thing in the world. I do not believe in the stability of the American government. For instance, the cities, moved by a most unrespectable jealousy, could not agree upon where Congress should sit. Consequently, they decided to build a new city. They chose a site; they decreed it should be called Washington; the plan of the "Queen City" circulates through Europe. There is too much deliberation, too much humanity in this affair. One might bet a thousand to one that the city will not be built, or that it will not be called Washington, or that Congress will not reside there.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Ancient French Constitution.

Three systems have been maintained regarding the ancient French Constitution: some claim the Nation had no constitution; others maintain the contrary; others still take a middle path, asserting that the French had a constitution, but it was not observed.

The first sentiment is untenable. To the man of good sense who asks what the ancient constitution was, one may boldly reply: "It is what you felt when you were in France." It was that mixture of liberty and authority, of laws and opinions, which led the foreigner to believe he lived under a government other than his own.

A particular character of this monarchy is that it possesses a certain theocratic element which is peculiar to it, and which gave it fourteen hundred years of duration. There is nothing so national as this element. The Bishops, successors to the Druids in this regard, have only perfected it.

In the civil administration, I ascend in thought from the pacific Fleury unto those such as St. Ouen and St. Leger, and so many others of high political distinction amidst the night of their century; true Orpheuses of France, who tamed the tigers and drew the very oaks to follow them. I doubt whether one might elsewhere encounter a comparable lineage.

Yet, while the priesthood in France stood as one of the three columns supporting the Throne—acting with such weight in the councils of the nation, the tribunals, the ministry, and the embassies—its influence in the civil administration remained scarce perceived; and even when a priest sat as First Minister, France never endured a government of priests.

Every influence was most equitably balanced, and each man kept his station. In this regard, it was England that most resembled France. Should she ever banish from her political tongue those words, *Church and State*, her government shall perish as surely as did that of her rival.

It was the fashion in France (for all is fashion in that land) to declare oneself a slave; yet why, then, did the French tongue possess the word *Citizen* even before the Revolution seized it for its own dishonour—a word that defies translation into other European languages? The younger Racine addressed this noble verse to the King of France, in the name of his city of Paris:

Under a Citizen-King, every citizen is king.

To praise the patriotism of a Frenchman, it was said: *He is a great citizen.* Vainly would one attempt to transplant this expression into our other tongues; *gross burger* in German, *gran citadino* in Italian, and the like, would be intolerable. But we must depart from generalities.

Several members of the ancient magistracy have gathered and expounded the principles of the French Monarchy in an interesting volume, which appears to merit the entire confidence of the French people. These magistrates begin, as is fitting, with the Royal Prerogative, and truly, nothing is more magnificent.

"The Constitution attributes to the King the legislative power; from him emanates all jurisdiction. He hath the right to render justice, and to cause it to be rendered by his officers; to grant mercy, privileges, and rewards; to dispose of offices and confer nobility; to convoke and dissolve the assemblies of the Nation when his wisdom so dictates; to make peace and war, and to summon the armies." (p. 28).

These are, without doubt, vast prerogatives; but let us observe what the French Constitution hath placed in the other scale of the balance.

"The King reigns only by the Law, and hath no power to do all things according to his appetite." (p. 364).

"There are laws which the Kings themselves have confessed—according to an expression now celebrated—to be in an *happy impotence to violate*; these are the laws of the realm, distinct from the laws of circumstance or non-constitutional acts, termed the *Laws of the King*." (pp. 29-30).

Thus, for example, the succession to the crown is a masculine primogeniture of a rigid form. The marriages of Princes of the Blood,

contracted without the King's authority, are null. If the reigning dynasty should become extinct, it is the Nation that bestows upon itself a King.

"The Kings, as supreme legislators, have ever spoken affirmatively in publishing their laws. Nevertheless, there is also a consent of the people; but this consent is naught but the expression of the wish, the gratitude, and the acceptance of the Nation." (p. 271).

"Three orders, three chambers, three deliberations; thus is the Nation represented. The result of these deliberations, if unanimous, presents the will of the Estates-General." (p. 332).

"The laws of the realm can only be made in a general assembly of the whole kingdom, with the common accord of the folk of the three estates. The Prince may not derogate from these laws; and should he dare to touch them, all that he hath done may be annulled by his successor." (pp. 292-293).

"The necessity of the Nation's consent to the establishment of taxes is an incontestable truth, acknowledged by the Kings." (p. 302).

"The will of two orders cannot bind the third, save by its own consent." (p. 302).

"The consent of the Estates-General is necessary for the validity of any perpetual alienation of the domain." (p. 303). "And the same surveillance is enjoined upon them to prevent any partial dismemberment of the realm." (p. 304).

"Justice is administered in the King's name by magistrates who examine the laws and see whether they be not contrary to the fundamental laws." (p. 343). A portion of their duty is to resist the erring will of the Sovereign. It was upon this principle that the famous Chancellor de l'Hospital, addressing the Parliament of Paris in 1561, said: "Magistrates must not permit themselves to be intimidated by the passing wrath of sovereigns, nor by the fear of disgrace, but must ever hold present the oath to obey the ordinances, which are the true commands of Kings." (p. 345).

One sees Louis XI, halted by a double refusal from his Parliament, desist from an unconstitutional alienation. One sees Louis XIV solemnly

recognize this right of free verification, and command his magistrates to disobey him—under pain of disobedience—should he address to them commands contrary to the law. This order is no play on words: the King forbids obedience to the *man*; he hath no greater enemy.

This superb monarch further commanded his magistrates to hold as null all letters-patent bearing evocations or commissions for the judgment of civil and criminal causes, and even to punish the bearers of such letters. (p. 363).

The magistrates cry out: "Happy land, where servitude is unknown!" (p. 361). And it is a priest distinguished by his piety and learning (Fleury) who writes, in expounding the public law of France: "In France, all private persons are free; there is no slavery: freedom for domiciles, travels, commerce, marriages, choice of profession, acquisitions, dispositions of goods, and successions." (p. 362).

"Military power must not interpose itself in the civil administration. The governors of provinces have nothing save what concerns arms; and they may use them only against the enemies of the State, and not against the citizen who is subject to the justice of the State." (p. 364).

"The magistrates are irremovable, and these important offices can become vacant only by the death of the incumbent, voluntary resignation, or judged forfeiture." (p. 356).

"The King, for causes concerning himself, pleads in his tribunals against his subjects. He has been seen condemned to pay the tithe of the fruits of his garden." (p. 367).

If the French examine themselves in good faith, amidst the silence of the passions, they will feel that this is enough, and perhaps more than enough, for a nation too noble to be enslaved, and too impetuous to be free.

Shall it be said that these fair laws were not executed? In that case, it was the fault of the French, and there remains for them no hope of liberty: for when a people knows not how to derive benefit from its fundamental laws, it is quite futile for it to seek others. It is a sign that it is not made for liberty, or that it is irretrievably corrupt.

But in repelling these sinister ideas, I shall cite, regarding the excellence of the French Constitution, a testimony irrefutable from every point of view: that of a great politician and an ardent republican—Machiavelli.

"There have been," says he, "many kings and very few good kings: I speak of absolute sovereigns, among whom one must not count the kings of Egypt, when that country, in the most remote times, governed itself by laws; nor those of Sparta; nor those of France, in our modern times, the government of that kingdom being, to our knowledge, the most tempered by laws."

"The kingdom of France," he says elsewhere, "is happy and tranquil, because the king is subject to an infinity of laws which ensure the security of the peoples. He who constituted this government willed that the kings should dispose at their pleasure of arms and treasures; but for the rest, he subjected them to the empire of the laws."

Who would not be struck to see in what light this powerful mind envisaged, three centuries ago, the fundamental laws of the French monarchy?

The French, on this point, have been spoiled by the English. The latter told them, without believing it, that France was enslaved—just as they told them that Shakespeare was better than Racine; and the French believed it. Even the honest Judge Blackstone, towards the end of his *Commentaries*, placed France and Turkey upon the same level; upon which one must say with Montaigne: "One cannot too much scoff at the impudence of such a coupling."

But these English, when they made their revolution—at least the one that endured—did they suppress royalty or the House of Peers to gain their liberty? By no means. Rather, from their ancient constitution brought into activity, they drew the Declaration of their Rights.

There is no Christian nation in Europe that is not by right free, or free enough. There is none that hath not, in the purest monuments of its legislation, all the elements of the constitution which suits it. But one must especially guard against the enormous error of believing that liberty is something absolute, not susceptible of more or less. Let us recall the two

jars of Jupiter; instead of good and evil, let us place therein repose and liberty. Jupiter draws the lot of nations: more of the one and less of the other. Man hath no part in this distribution.

Another most fatal error is to attach oneself too rigidly to ancient monuments. One must doubtless respect them, but one must above all consider what jurists call the *last state*. Every free constitution is by its nature variable, and variable in proportion as it is free; to wish to bring it back to its rudiments, without abating anything, is a mad enterprise.

Everything unites to establish that the French have sought to surpass human power; that these disordered efforts lead them to slavery; that they need only to know what they possess; and that if they are made for a greater degree of liberty than that which they enjoyed seven years ago—which is not clear at all—they have at hand, in all the monuments of their history and legislation, everything required to make them the honour and the envy of Europe.

But if the French are made for monarchy, and if it is merely a question of seating the monarchy upon its true bases, what error, what fatality, what fatal prejudice could alienate them from their legitimate King?

Hereditary succession, in a monarchy, is something so precious that every other consideration must yield before it. The greatest crime a royalist Frenchman can commit is to see in Louis XVIII anything other than his King, and to diminish the favour with which it is vital to surround him by discussing in an unfavourable manner the qualities of the man or his actions. He would be base and culpable indeed, the Frenchman who did not blush to return to times past to seek there for wrongs, true or false! Accession to the throne is a new birth: one reckons only from that moment.

If there be a commonplace in morality, it is that power and greatness corrupt man, and that the best kings have been those whom adversity had tried. Why then should the French deprive themselves of the advantage of being governed by a prince formed in the terrible school of misfortune? How much those six years just passed must have furnished him with reflection! How far he is from the intoxication of power! How disposed he must be to undertake all to reign gloriously! With what holy ambition he

must be penetrated! What prince in the universe could have more motives, more desires, more means to close the wounds of France?

Have the French not tried the blood of the Capets long enough? They know by an experience of eight centuries that this blood is mild; why change? The head of this great family has shown himself in his declaration to be loyal, generous, and profoundly moved by religious truths; no one disputes his great natural wit and his many acquired attainments. There was a time, perhaps, when it was well that the King knew not how to spell; but in this century, where one believes in books, a lettered King is an advantage. What is more important is that one cannot suppose him to hold any of those exaggerated ideas capable of alarming the French. Who could forget that he was disliked at Coblentz? That is a great title for him.

In his declaration, he pronounced the word *liberty*; and if anyone objects that this word is placed in the shadow, one may answer that a King ought not to speak the language of revolutions. A solemn discourse addressed to his people must be distinguished by a certain sobriety of projects and expressions which hath nothing in common with the precipitation of a systematic private citizen. When the King of France hath said: "That the French constitution subjects the laws to forms it hath consecrated, and the sovereign himself to the observation of the laws, in order to forestall the wisdom of the legislator against the snares of seduction, and to defend the liberty of the subjects against the abuses of authority," he hath said all, since he hath promised liberty through the constitution.

The King must not speak like an orator of the Parisian tribune. If he hath discovered that it is wrong to speak of liberty as of something absolute, that it is, on the contrary, something susceptible of more and less; and that the art of the legislator is not to make the people *free*, but *free enough*, he hath discovered a great truth, and he must be praised for his restraint instead of blamed. A celebrated Roman, at the moment he restored liberty to the people best made for it, said to that people: *Libertate modice utendum*. What would he have said to the French? Surely the King, in speaking soberly of liberty, thought less of his own interests than of those of the French.

"The constitution," the King says further, "prescribes conditions for the establishment of taxes, in order to assure the people that the tributes they pay are necessary for the salvation of the State." The King, then, hath not the right to impose arbitrarily, and this confession alone excludes despotism.

"It entrusts to the primary bodies of the magistracy the deposit of the laws, that they may watch over their execution and enlighten the conscience of the monarch should it be deceived." There is the deposit of the laws placed in the hands of the superior magistrates; there is the right of remonstrance consecrated. Now, wherever a body of great hereditary, or at least irremovable, magistrates have, by the constitution, the right to warn the monarch, to enlighten his religion, and to complain of abuses, there is no despotism.

"It places the fundamental laws under the safeguard of the King and the three orders, in order to prevent revolutions, the greatest of calamities that can afflict peoples."

There is, then, a constitution, since the constitution is naught but the collection of fundamental laws; and the King cannot touch these laws. Should he attempt it, the three orders would have a *veto* over him, as each of them hath over the other two.

And one would surely be mistaken if one accused the King of having spoken too vaguely, for this vagueness is precisely the proof of a high wisdom. The King would have acted most imprudently had he set boundaries which would have prevented him from advancing or retreating: in reserving to himself a certain latitude of execution, he was inspired. The French will one day agree: they will confess that the King promised all he could promise.

Did Charles II find it well to have adhered to the propositions of the Scots? Men said to him, as they have said to Louis XVIII: "One must accommodate oneself to the times; one must bend; it is folly to sacrifice a crown to save the hierarchy." He believed it, and he did very ill. The King of France is wiser: how do the French persist in not rendering him justice?

If this prince had committed the folly of proposing to the French a new constitution, it is then that one might have accused him of indulging in a perfidious vagueness; for in fact he would have said nothing: had he proposed his own work, there would have been but one cry against him, and that cry would have been well-founded. By what right, indeed, would he have commanded obedience, as soon as he abandoned the ancient laws? Is not the arbitrary a common domain, to which everyone hath an equal right? There is no youth in France who would not have shown the defects of the new work and proposed corrections. Let the matter be well examined, and it will be seen that the King, as soon as he abandoned the ancient constitution, had but one thing left to say: *I shall do what they wish.* It is to this indecent and absurd phrase that the finest discourses of the King would have been reduced, if translated into plain language. Do men think seriously of it, when they blame the King for not having proposed a new revolution to the French? Since the insurrection began the appalling misfortunes of his family, he hath seen three constitutions accepted, sworn, and solemnly consecrated. The first two lasted but an instant, and the third exists only in name. Should the King have proposed five or six more to his subjects to leave them the choice? Truly! the three trials cost them dearly enough, that no sensible man should take it into his head to propose another. But this new proposition, which would be a folly on the part of a private citizen, would be, on the part of the King, a folly and a crime.

OF THE SOVEREIGN AND THE RESTORATION OF ORDER

By whatever path the King might have chosen to tread, it was a thing impossible that he should satisfy the caprices of all. Evils attended a total silence; evils attended the Declaration as it was given; and evils would surely have attended any alternative formulation. In this state of uncertainty, he acted with profound wisdom by adhering strictly to Principle, choosing to offend only the passions and prejudices of the hour, while proclaiming that the French Constitution should be for him the Ark of the Covenant.

If the French people would but examine this Declaration with a composed spirit, I should be much deceived if they did not find therein ample reason to revere their King. In those terrible straits wherewith he was

beset, nothing could have been more seductive than the temptation to barter Principles for the recovery of a Throne. How many voices cried out—how many souls believed—that the King was undoing himself by his obstinate attachment to ancient ideas! It seemed so natural to harken to terms of accommodation; it was, above all, so easy to concede to such propositions with the secret intent of reclaiming the ancient prerogative hereafter, without any breach of loyalty, but relying solely upon the irresistible force of circumstances.

There is, therefore, a superlative candour, a high nobility, and a formidable courage in saying to the French:

"I cannot make you happy; I cannot, and I ought not, to reign save by the Constitution. I shall not lay a finger upon the Ark of the Lord. I await your return to Reason; I await your comprehension of that truth, so simple and yet so evident, which you nonetheless persist in rejecting: namely, that with this same Constitution, I can bestow upon you a regime entirely transformed."

THE SACRED ARK AND THE CORRUPTIONS OF TIME

O! How the King displayed his sagacity when he declared that the ancient and wise Constitution was for him a Sacred Ark, and that he was forbidden to lay a rash hand upon it! Yet he adds, with equal weight, that he desires to restore to it all that purity which Time has corrupted, and all that vigour which Time has enfeebled. Once more, these words are nothing less than inspired; for one reads in them, with luminous clarity, that which lies within the power of Man, as distinct from that which belongs only to God.

It were a thing much to be desired that this impetuous nation, which seems incapable of returning to Truth until it has exhausted every variety of Error, should at last perceive a most palpable fact: that she is the dupe and the victim of a small knot of men who interpose themselves between her and her legitimate Sovereign, from whom she can expect nothing but benefits.

Let us suppose the worst. The King shall allow the sword of justice to fall upon a few parricides; he shall punish with humiliations a few nobles

who have displeased the State. But what is that to thee, honest tiller of the soil, or to thee, industrious artisan, or to any peaceful citizen whom Heaven has blessed with obscurity? Bethink thyself that thou and thy fellows constitute nearly the whole of the Nation; and that the entire People suffers the pangs of anarchy only because a handful of miscreants strikes it with terror of a King—of whom they themselves are terrified.

THE GENIUS OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE: A STRANGE SERVITUDE

Never shall a people have let slip a fairer opportunity, if they persist in rejecting their King; for they expose themselves to being governed by force, instead of crowning their legitimate Sovereign with their own hands. What merit would they then possess in the eyes of the Prince! With what prodigies of zeal and affection would the King strive to reward the fidelity of his people!

But if they remain obstinate, do they know what fate awaits them? The French are now sufficiently ripened by calamity to hear a harsh truth: which is that, amidst the paroxysms of their fanatical liberty, the cold observer is often tempted to cry out, with Tiberius: *O homines ad servitutem natos!* (O men, born for slavery!)

There are, as is well known, several species of courage, and most assuredly the Frenchman does not possess them all. Intrepid before the enemy, he is a coward before Authority, even the most iniquitous. Nothing equals the patience of this people that calls itself "free." In five years, they have been made to swallow three constitutions and the Revolutionary Government. Tyrants succeed one another, and the people ever obeys. Their masters have gone so far as to crush them with grapeshot while mocking them:

"You believe you do not want this law," they say, "but rest assured that you do. If you dare refuse it, we shall fire upon you with canister-shot to punish you for not wanting what you actually want." — And they did it.

It hung by a thread that the French nation is not still under the hideous yoke of Robespierre. Certes, she may congratulate herself, but she cannot

glorify herself for having escaped that tyranny; and I know not if the days of her servitude were more shameful than the day of her liberation. The history of the Ninth of Thermidor is brief: *A few scoundrels put to death a few other scoundrels.* Without this family quarrel, the French would still be groaning under the scepter of the Committee of Public Safety.

And who knows for what further degradations they are reserved? They have given such proofs of patience that there is no depth of abasement they need not fear. This is a great lesson—not for the French people, who, more than any people on earth, will always accept their masters and never choose them—but for that small number of good Frenchmen whom circumstances may render influential. Let them neglect nothing to snatch the nation from these debasing fluctuations by casting her into the arms of her King. He is a man, no doubt; but does she hope to be governed by an angel? He is a man, but today we are certain that he knows it, and that is much. If the will of the French replaced him upon the Throne of his fathers, he would wed his nation, and she would find all in him: goodness, justice, love, and talents ripened in the severe school of adversity.

The duty of every good Frenchman at this moment is to work without ceal to direct public opinion in favor of the King. Here, the Royalists must examine themselves with the utmost severity. I am no Frenchman; I am a stranger to your intrigues. But if a Royalist says: *"I am ready to shed my blood for the King, yet I cannot help but blame his proclamations,"* I answer him: You lie to the world and to yourself. If you were capable of sacrificing your life, you would sacrifice your prejudices. He has no need of your life; he needs your prudence, your measured zeal, and your passive devotion.

As those threads which a child might break in play form, when united, the cable that holds the anchor of a great ship, so too does a multitude of insignificant criticisms create a formidable army of opposition. Men who believe they have reached the age of reason reproach the King for his inaction! They compare him to Henry IV, observing that the Great Prince used weapons other than proclamations. But why not reproach him for not having conquered Germany and Italy like Charlemagne, there to live nobly until the French chose to listen to reason?

As for those who shriek against the Monarchy, it is not all hatred; it is a sentiment more complex. There is no man of spirit in France who does not, in some measure, despise himself. The national ignominy weighs upon every heart. The base man, a stranger to all noble ideas, revenges himself for his own abjection by contemplating the spectacle of humiliated grandeur. To raise himself in his own eyes, he looks upon the King of France and is satisfied with his own stature when compared to this overturned Colossus.

French people, do not let yourselves be seduced by the sophistries of vanity or cowardice. Listen no longer to the "reasoners"; there is too much reasoning in France, and reasoning banishes Reason. Give yourself up without fear to the infallible instinct of your conscience. Do you wish to rise in your own esteem? Do you wish to perform an act of sovereignty? Recall your Sovereign.

What are we, feeble and blind humans! And what is this flickering light we call Reason? When we have assembled all probabilities and interrogated history, we may still embrace only a deceptive cloud instead of the Truth. What decrees has the Great Being pronounced upon the King, upon France, and upon Europe? A dark cloud covers the future. Nevertheless, everything announces that the present order in France cannot endure, and that invincible Nature must bring back the Monarchy. Whether our desires are fulfilled or whether inexorable Providence has decided otherwise, it is useful to seek, by never losing sight of the nature of man, how these great changes are wrought, and what role the multitude may play in an event whose date alone remains uncertain.

CHAPTER IX

CONCERNING THE MANNER IN WHICH THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION SHALL BE WROUGHT, SHOULD IT COME TO PASS

In the fashioning of hypotheses touching upon the Counter-Revolution, men fall too frequently into the error of reasoning as though such an event must needs be the fruit of popular deliberation. "The people fear," it is said; "the people will," "the people shall never consent," "it suiteth not the people." What pitiable folly! The people are a nullity in revolutions, or at the very least, they enter therein only as a passive instrument. Four or five persons, perchance, shall bestow a King upon France. Letters from Paris shall announce to the provinces that France hath a Sovereign, and the provinces shall cry: *Vive le Roi!* Even in Paris, all inhabitants save a score, perhaps, shall learn upon waking that they possess a Monarch. "Is it possible?" they shall exclaim. "Here is a rarity indeed! Who knoweth by which gate he shall make his entry? It were wise, perchance, to hire windows betimes, for there shall be a great press of people." Should the Monarchy be restored, the people shall no more decree its re-establishment than they decreed its destruction or the institution of the Revolutionary Government.

I entreat that weight be given to these reflections, and I commend them especially to those who deem a revolution impossible because there are too many Frenchmen attached to the Republic, and because a change would bring suffering to so many. *Scilicet is superis labor est!* One may certainly dispute the majority with the Republic; but whether it possesseth it or no is a matter of total indifference. Enthusiasm and fanaticism are not enduring states. Such a degree of erethism soon exhausteth human nature; so that even were we to suppose that a people—and the French people above all—could desire a thing for long, it is certain at least that they could not desire it long with passion. On the contrary, the febrile paroxysm having spent itself, dejection, apathy, and indifference invariably succeed the great exertions of enthusiasm. Such is the present state of France, which desireth nothing now with passion, save only repose. Even were it granted, then, that the

Republic hath the majority (which is indubitably false), what mattereth it? When the King presenteth himself, assuredly the votes shall not be counted, and no man shall stir; for the reason that he who preferreth the Republic to Monarchy yet preferreth repose to the Republic; and further, because the wills opposed to Royalty shall find no means of union.

In politics, as in mechanics, theories deceive if one fail to consider the diverse qualities of the materials which compose the machine. At first glance, for instance, this proposition appeareth true: *The prior consent of the French is necessary for the restoration of the Monarchy.* Yet nothing is more false. Let us depart from theories and contemplate the facts.

A courier arriveth at Bordeaux, at Nantes, at Lyons; he bringeth tidings that the King is acknowledged at Paris; that some faction or other (whether named or not) hath seized authority and declared that it holdeth power only in the King's name; that a messenger hath been dispatched to the Sovereign, who is momentarily expected; and that on every side the white cockade is unfurled. Rumour seizeth these tidings and burdeneth them with a thousand imposing circumstances. What shall be done? To give the Republic its fairest chance, I grant it the majority, and even a body of republican troops. These troops shall, perhaps, in the first moment, assume a mutinous posture; but on that very day they shall wish to dine, and shall begin to detach themselves from a power that payeth no longer. Every officer, enjoying no consideration and feeling it full well, perceiveth with equal clarity that the first to cry *Vive le Roi* shall be a personage of consequence. Self-love painteth for him, in seductive strokes, the image of a General of the Armies of His Most Christian Majesty, glittering with marks of honour, and looking down from the height of his grandeur upon those men who but lately summoned him to the bar of the municipality. These ideas are so simple, so natural, they can escape no man. Every officer feeleth them; whence it followeth they are all suspect one to another. Fear and mistrust produce deliberation and coldness. The soldier, no longer electrified by his officer, is yet more discouraged; the bond of discipline receiveth that inexplicable blow, that magical stroke which relaxeth it of a sudden. One turneth his gaze toward the Royal Paymaster who advanceth; another profiteth by the moment to rejoin his kin. None knoweth how to command, none how to obey; there is no longer a whole.

Among the townsmen, it is another matter entirely: men come and go, they jostle one another, they question. Each dreadeth him whose aid he requireth; doubt consumeth the hours, and minutes are decisive. Everywhere audacity encountereth prudence; the old man lacketh resolution, and the young man lacketh counsel. On one side are terrible perils; on the other, a certain amnesty and probable favours. Where, moreover, are the means of resistance? Where the leaders in whom one may confide? There is no danger in repose, and the slightest movement may prove an irremissible error. One must, therefore, wait. They wait; but on the morrow tidings arrive that such and such a fortress hath opened its gates—yet more reason to precipitate nothing. Presently it is learned the news was false; but two other cities, believing it true, have set the example in thinking to receive it; they have just submitted, and thereby determine the first, which had no such thought. The Governor of this place hath presented to the King the keys of his "good city of..." He is the first officer who hath had the honour of receiving him in a citadel of his realm. The King, upon the very ramparts, hath created him a Marshal of France; an immortal patent hath covered his escutcheon with lilies without number; his name shall forever be the fairest in France. At every minute, the Royalist movement gathereth strength; soon it becometh irresistible. VIVE LE ROI! cry love and fidelity, at the height of joy; VIVE LE ROI! replieth the hypocritical republican, at the height of terror. What mattereth it? There is but one cry. And the King is anointed.

Citizens! Thus are counter-revolutions made. God, having reserved unto Himself the formation of sovereignties, warneth us thereof by never entrusting to the multitude the choice of its masters. He employeth them, in those great movements which decide the fate of empires, only as a passive instrument. Never do they obtain what they desire; they always accept, they never choose. One may even remark an *affectation* of Providence (if I may be permitted the expression): that the very efforts of a people to attain an object are the precise means she employeth to distance them from it. Thus, the Roman people gave themselves masters while believing they fought the aristocracy in the train of Caesar. This is the image of all popular insurrections. In the French Revolution, the people have been constantly enchained, outraged, ruined, and mutilated by every faction; and the

factions, in their turn, the playthings of one another, have drifted ceaselessly despite all their efforts, to be broken at last upon the reef that awaited them.

If one desireth to know the probable result of the French Revolution, it sufficeth to examine that wherein all factions have been united: all have desired the abasement, even the destruction, of universal Christianity and of the Monarchy; whence it followeth that all their efforts shall result only in the exaltation of Christianity and of the Monarchy.

All men who have written or meditated upon history have admired that secret force which maketh sport of human counsels. He was of our number, that great captain of antiquity, who honoured it as an intelligent and free power, and who undertook nothing without commending himself to it.

But it is above all in the establishment and the overthrow of sovereignties that the action of Providence shineth forth in the most striking manner. Not only do peoples *en masse* enter into these great movements only as the timber and cordage employed by a machinist; but even their leaders are such only to foreign eyes; in fact, they are dominated even as they dominate the people. These men who, taken together, seem the tyrants of the multitude, are themselves tyrannized by two or three, who are so by one alone. And if this unique individual could and would reveal his secret, we should see that he knoweth not himself how he seized power; that his influence is a greater mystery to him than to others; and that circumstances, which he could neither foresee nor bring about, have done all for him and without him.

Who would have told the proud Henry VI that a tavern wench would snatch from him the sceptre of France? The silly explanations given of this great event do not strip it of its marvelous character; and though it hath been twice dishonoured, first by the absence and then by the prostitution of talent, it hath nonetheless remained the only subject of French history truly worthy of the epic muse. Is it believed that the arm which of old employed so frail an instrument is shortened, and that the Supreme Ordainer of empires taketh counsel of the French to give them a King? No: He shall choose again, as He hath ever done, the weakest thing to confound the strong. He hath no need of foreign legions; He hath no need of the Coalition; and as He hath maintained the integrity of France, despite the

counsels and the might of so many princes—who are before His eyes as though they were not—when the moment is come, He shall re-establish the French Monarchy despite its enemies; He shall drive away these noisy insects *pulveris exigui jactu*: the King shall come, shall see, and shall conquer.

Then shall men marvel at the profound nullity of those who appeared so powerful. Today, it belongeth to the wise to forestall this judgment, and to be certain, before experience hath proven it, that the rulers of France possess only a factitious and fleeting power, whose very excess proveth its nothingness; that they have been neither planted nor sown; that their trunk hath struck no root in the earth, and that a breath shall carry them away like chaff.

It is, therefore, quite in vain that so many writers insist upon the inconveniences of the restoration of the Monarchy; in vain do they affright the French with the consequences of a counter-revolution; and when they conclude, from these inconveniences, that the French, fearing them, shall never suffer the restoration of the Monarchy, they conclude most poorly; for the French shall not deliberate at all, and it is perhaps from the hand of a mere woman that they shall receive a King.

No nation can give itself a government: only, when such and such a right existeth in its constitution, and this right is unrecognized or suppressed, a few men, aided by circumstances, may thrust aside the obstacles and cause the rights of the people to be acknowledged: human power extendeth no further.

For the rest, though Providence concerneth herself not at all with what it must cost the French to have a King, it is nonetheless most important to observe that there is certainly error or bad faith on the part of those writers who strike terror into the French concerning the evils which the restoration of the Monarchy would entail.

CHAPTER X

ON THE PRETENDED DANGERS OF A COUNTER-REVOLUTION

§ I. — General Considerations

It is a sophism of the most vulgar order, yet prevalent in these unhappy times, to dwell insistently upon the perils of a counter-revolution as a pretext for eschewing a return to Monarchy.

A multitude of tracts, calculated to seduce the French people into an adherence to the Republic, are but tedious elaborations of this single fallacy. Their authors descant upon the calamities inseparable from revolutions; then, observing that the Throne cannot be restored save by a new convulsion, they conclude that the Republic must be sustained. This prodigious error, whether it spring from a base timidity or a calculated desire to deceive, demands a rigorous examination.

Words are the parents of almost every error. We have grown accustomed to bestowing the name of *counter-revolution* upon any movement destined to extinguish the Revolution; and because this movement is contrary to the first, it is inferred that it must be of the same species. One ought to conclude precisely the reverse.

Can it be supposed, by some freak of reason, that the return from malady to health is as agonizing as the descent from health into disease? Or that the Monarchy, subverted by monsters, must be restored by their likenesses? Ah! how those who employ this sophism do it justice in the sanctuary of their own hearts! They know right well that the friends of Altar and Throne are incapable of those excesses with which their enemies have defiled themselves; they know that, even allowing for the utmost frailties of our nature, the oppressed party possesses a thousandfold more virtue than that of the oppressors! They know that the former knows neither how to defend itself nor how to avenge itself—indeed, they have often mocked it loudly for this very impotence.

To achieve the French Revolution, it was necessary to overthrow Religion, to outrage Morality, to violate every right of property, and to commit every conceivable crime. For this diabolical work, it was necessary to employ such a legion of vicious men that perhaps never before have so many vices conspired to effect a single evil. Conversely, to restore Order, the King will summon every virtue; he will desire it, no doubt; but by the very nature of things, he shall be compelled to it. His most pressing interest will be to wed Justice to Mercy; men of merit will gravitate of their own accord to those stations where they may be of service; and Religion, lending her sceptre to Politics, will endow her with a strength that can be derived only from that August Sister.

I doubt not that a crowd of men will demand a foundation for these magnificent hopes; but is it believed that the political world moves by chance, and that it is not organized, directed, and animated by that same Wisdom which shines in the physical universe? The guilty hands that subvert a State necessarily produce painful lacerations; for no free agent can thwart the designs of the Creator without drawing into his sphere of activity evils proportioned to the magnitude of the outrage. This law appertains more to the goodness of the Supreme Being than to His justice.

But when man labors to restore Order, he associates himself with the Author of Order; he is favored by Nature—that is to say, by the ensemble of secondary causes, which are the ministers of Divinity. His action partakes of the Divine; it is at once gentle and imperious; it constrains nothing, yet nothing resists it. In disposing, it heals. As it operates, one perceives the cessation of that disquietude, that painful agitation, which is the signature of disorder—just as, under the hand of a skilled surgeon, the luxated limb is apprised of its restoration by the vanishing of pain.

Frenchmen! It was to the sound of infernal songs, the blasphemies of atheism, the cries of death, and the prolonged groans of slaughtered innocence; it was by the glare of conflagrations, upon the ruins of the Throne and the Altar, bedewed by the blood of the best of Kings and a countless host of other victims; it was through the contempt of morals and public faith, and in the midst of every forfeit, that your seducers and tyrants founded what they dare to call your *liberty*.

It is in the name of the GOD THRICE-GREAT AND THRICE-GOOD, in the wake of those men whom He loves and inspires, and under the influence of His creative power, that you shall return to your ancient Constitution, and that a King shall grant you the only thing you ought wisely to desire: Liberty through the Monarch.

By what deplorable blindness do you persist in struggling painfully against that Power which nullifies all your efforts to warn you of its presence? You are impotent only because you have dared to separate yourselves from it. From the moment you act in concert with it, you shall participate in its nature; every obstacle shall be leveled before you, and you shall laugh at the puerile terrors that agitate you today. All the components of the political machine, possessing a natural tendency toward the place assigned to them, will favor the efforts of the King; and Order being the natural element of man, you shall find therein the happiness you seek in vain in chaos. The Revolution made you suffer because it was the handiwork of every vice, and vices are justly the executioners of man. For the contrary reason, the return to Monarchy, far from producing the evils you dread, will terminate those which consume you today. All your efforts will be positive: you will destroy nothing but destruction.

Rid yourselves, once and for all, of those desolating doctrines which have dishonored our century and undone France. You have already learned to know the preachers of these fatal dogmas; yet the impression they have left is not effaced. In all your schemes of creation and restoration, you forget only God. They have severed you from Him; it is now only by an effort of ratiocination that you raise your thoughts to the inexhaustible Source of all existence. You wish to see only man—his action so feeble, so dependent, so circumscribed; his will so corrupt and wavering. The existence of a Superior Cause is for you but a theory. Yet it presses upon you, it environs you; you touch it, and the entire universe proclaims it. When you are told that without it you shall be strong only to destroy, this is no vain theory; it is a practical truth founded upon the experience of ages and the knowledge of human nature. Open the pages of history; you will not find a single political creation—nay, you will not find any institution of strength and duration—that does not repose upon a Divine idea. It matters not its nature, for there is no religious system entirely false. Speak to us no

more, then, of the difficulties and misfortunes that alarm you regarding the consequences of a counter-revolution. All the calamities you have endured proceeded from yourselves; why should you not have been wounded by the ruins of the edifice you overthrew upon your own heads? Reconstruction is another order of things; return only to the path that leads thereto. It is not by the road of nothingness that one arrives at creation.

Oh! how guilty are those deceptive or pusillanimous writers who permit themselves to terrify the people with that vain scarecrow called *counter-revolution*! Who, while conceding that the Revolution was a frightful scourge, maintain nonetheless that it is impossible to turn back. One would think the evils of the Revolution were at an end, and that the French had reached a safe harbor! The reign of Robespierre so crushed this people, so struck their imagination, that they deem tolerable, and almost happy, any state of affairs where slaughter is not uninterrupted. During the fever of the Terror, foreigners remarked that every letter from France recounting the hideous scenes of that cruel epoch concluded with the words: *At present, we are tranquil*—that is to say, the executioners are resting; they are gathering their strength; meanwhile, all is well. This sentiment has survived the infernal regime that sired it. The Frenchman, petrified by terror and discouraged by the errors of foreign policy, has retreated into an egoism that allows him to see only himself, and the place and moment in which he exists. Men are assassinated in a hundred places in France; it matters not, for it is not he who was pillaged or massacred. If one of these outrages is committed in his own street, next door to his house, what of it? The moment is passed; now all is quiet. He will double his bolts and think of it no more. In a word, every Frenchman is sufficiently happy on the day they do not kill him.

Meanwhile, the laws are without vigor; the government acknowledges its impotence to enforce them. The most infamous crimes multiply on every side; the revolutionary demon raises his head with pride; the Constitution is but a cobweb, and power permits itself horrible transgressions. Marriage is but a legal prostitution; there is no longer paternal authority, no longer dread of crime, nor asylum for the indigent. Hideous suicide denounces to the government the despair of the wretched who accuse it. The people are demoralized in the most terrifying fashion; and the abolition of worship,

joined to the total absence of public education, prepares for France a generation whose mere thought makes one shudder.

Cowardly optimists! This, then, is the order of things you fear to see changed! Shake off, shake off your miserable lethargy! Instead of showing the people imaginary evils, employ your talents to make them desire that gentle and healing commotion which shall bring the King back to his Throne and Order back to France.

Show us, men of narrow vision, show us those terrible evils with which you are threatened to disgust you with Monarchy. Do you not see that your republican institutions have no roots? They are merely placed upon your soil, whereas the former were planted within it. It required the axe to fell the latter; the others will yield to a breath and leave no trace. It is not quite the same thing, surely, to strip a *président à mortier* of his hereditary dignity, which was a property, as to bid a temporary judge descend from a seat where he possesses no dignity. The Revolution caused much suffering because it destroyed much; because it violated, abruptly and harshly, all property, all prejudice, and all custom. Since every plebeian tyranny is by nature impetuous, insulting, and pitiless, that which operated the French Revolution was bound to carry this character to excess, the universe having never beheld a tyranny more base or more absolute.

Opinion is the sensitive fiber of man; he cries out when wounded there. This is what rendered the Revolution so agonizing, for it trampled underfoot every grandeur of opinion. Now, even if the restoration of the Monarchy were to cause the same number of men the same physical privations, there would always be an immense difference, in that it would destroy no dignity; for there is no dignity in France today, for the simple reason that there is no sovereignty.

But even considering only physical privations, the difference would be no less striking. The usurping power sacrificed the innocent; the King will pardon the guilty. The one abolished legitimate property; the other will deliberate upon illegitimate property. The one took for its motto: *Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis*. After seven years of effort, it has not yet organized a primary school or a rural festival. Even its partisans mock its laws, its offices, its institutions, and its very dress. The King, building upon

a true foundation, will not grope in the dark. An unknown force will preside over his acts; he will act only to restore; and every regular action torments only the evil.

It is further a great error to imagine that the people have anything to lose by the restoration of Monarchy; for the people have gained only in imagination from the general upheaval. "They have a right to every office," it is said. What does it matter? The question is what those offices are worth. These posts, about which so much noise is made and which are offered to the people as a great conquest, are in fact nothing before the tribunal of opinion. Even the military state, once more honorable in France than any other, has lost its luster. It no longer possesses grandeur of opinion, and peace will lower it further. The soldiers are threatened with the restoration of the Monarchy, yet no one has a greater interest in it than they. Nothing is so evident as the necessity the King will be under to maintain them at their posts; and it will depend upon them, sooner or later, to transform this political necessity into a necessity of affection, duty, and gratitude. By an extraordinary combination of circumstances, there is nothing in them that can offend the most Royalist opinion. No one has the right to despise them, since they fight only for France. There is between them and the King no barrier of prejudice capable of obstructing his duties: he is French above all.

Let them remember James II, during the battle of La Hogue, applauding from the shore the valor of those Englishmen who were completing his dethronement. Could they doubt that the King would be proud of their valor, and regard them in his heart as the defenders of the integrity of his realm? Has he not publicly applauded that valor, regretting (as he must) that it was not deployed for a better cause? Has he not congratulated the braves of the Army of Condé for having overcome hatreds which the most profound artifice had labored so long to nourish? French soldiers, after their victories, have but one need: that the legitimate Sovereignty should come to legitimate their character. At present, they are feared and despised. The deepest indifference is the reward of their toils, and their fellow citizens are the men most indifferent in the universe to the trophies of the army; they often go so far as to detest those victories which nourish the warlike humor of their masters. The restoration of Monarchy will suddenly bestow upon the military a high place in opinion. Talent will find upon its path a real

dignity, an ever-increasing illustration, which shall be the property of the warriors and which they shall transmit to their children. This pure glory, this tranquil splendor, will be well worth the "honorable mentions" and that ostracism of oblivion which has succeeded the scaffold.

If we deign to contemplate this question from a more elevated prospect, it shall be discovered that Monarchy is, beyond all dispute, that constitution of government which imparts the greatest distinction to the greatest multitude of persons. Sovereignty, in this species of administration, possesses a lustre so resplendent that it may communicate a portion thereof —by just and necessary gradations—to a host of agents whom it marks with varying degrees of dignity. In a Republic, however, sovereignty is by no means palpable as it is in a Monarchy; it is a being purely moral, and its majesty is incommunicable. Thus, in republics, public offices are of no account beyond the precincts of the capital; and even there, they possess no weight save when occupied by members of the sovereign body. In such a state, it is the man who honours the office, and not the office the man: the latter shines not as an agent of power, but as a fragment of the Sovereign.

One may observe in those provinces subject to republics that public employments (if we except those reserved for the sovereign caste) elevate a man but little in the eyes of his fellows and signify nearly nothing in the scales of public opinion. For a Republic, by its very essence, is that government which accords the greatest rights to the smallest number of men —whom one calls the *Sovereign*—and refts them most entirely from all others—whom one calls *Subjects*. The nearer a republic approaches the condition of pure democracy, the more'striking shall this observation appear.

Let us recall that innumerable multitude of offices which the ancient government of France presented to universal ambition. The Clergy, the Sword, the Robe, the Finances, the Administration—what portals were flung wide to every talent and every species of aspiration! What incalculable gradations of personal distinction! Of this infinite number of places, not one was placed by right beyond the pretensions of the simple citizen; there existed even an enormous quantity of them which were prized

properties, rendering the owner a person of note, and which belonged exclusively to the Third Estate.

That the highest dignities should be of more difficult access to the commoner was a thing most reasonable. There is too much agitation in the state, and a deficiency of subordination, when all may pretend to everything. Order demands that, in general, employments be graduated according to the condition of the citizens, and that talent—or sometimes even simple protection—should lower the barriers separating the different classes. In this manner, there is emulation without humiliation, and movement without destruction; the distinction attached to an office is produced only by the difficulty of attaining it.

If it be objected that these distinctions are evil, the very nature of the question is altered; but I say: if your offices do not elevate those who possess them, boast not of bestowing them upon everyone, for you bestow nothing. If, conversely, offices are and ought to be distinctions, I repeat what no man of good faith can deny: that Monarchy is the government which, by its charges alone and independent of nobility, distinguishes the greatest number of men from the rest of their fellow-citizens.

§ II. On National Lands and Public Restitution

The French are frightened by the spectre of the restitution of national lands; the King is accused of not daring to touch upon this delicate article in his declaration. To a vast portion of the nation, one might ask: *What is this to you?*—and it would perhaps be a sufficient reply. But to avoid the appearance of evading difficulties, it is better to observe that the visible interest of France, and even the well-understood interest of the purchasers of these lands, accords with the restoration of the Monarchy.

The brigandage exercised against these properties strikes the most insensible conscience. No man believes in the legitimacy of these acquisitions; even he who declaims most eloquently in favour of current legislation hastens to resell in order to secure his lucre. Men dare not enjoy their gains fully; the more spirits cool, the less they will dare to spend upon

these foundations. Buildings will decay, and for a long time none will dare to erect new ones. Capital shall perish. There is already great evil in this regard, and those who reflect upon the abuse of decrees must comprehend what it is to cast a decree upon a third part of the most powerful kingdom in Europe.

Everything is stable under a stable government. It is, therefore, of vital importance even to the purchasers of national lands that the Monarchy be restored, so that they may know where they stand. The King could not speak with more clarity without extreme imprudence; but the conveniences of a particular class of individuals shall not arrest the Counter-Revolution.

§ III. On Vengeance and the Restoration of Law

Another bugbear employed to make the French dread the return of their King is the vengeance which must supposedly accompany it. This objection is chiefly raised by men of wit who do not believe it; yet it is well to discuss it for the sake of honest folk who deem it founded.

Under the empire of an illegitimate power, the most horrific vengeances are to be feared, for who possesses the right to repress them? The victim cannot invoke the authority of laws which do not exist. It is quite otherwise with a government seated upon its sacred, ancient, and legitimate bases; it has the right to stifle the most just resentments and to punish instantly, with the sword of the law, whosoever yields more to the sentiment of nature than to that of his duty.

A legitimate government alone has the right to proclaim an amnesty and the means to ensure its observance. It is demonstrated that the most perfect of Royalists, even if grievously outraged in his kin or his property, must be punished with death under a legitimate government if he dares to avenge his own injuries once the King has commanded his pardon. It is, therefore, only under a government founded upon our ancient laws that an amnesty may be surely granted and severely maintained.

On the Restoration of the Monarchy and the Illusion of Vengeance

Doubtless, it were a simple matter to debate to what extent the Sovereign's prerogative may enlarge the scope of an amnesty. The exceptions dictated by the foremost of his duties are manifest indeed. All those stained by the blood of Louis XVI can hope for grace from God alone; but who, thereafter, would dare trace with a steady hand the limits where the King's amnesty and clemence must cease? My heart and my pen alike recoil from the task. If any man ever dare write upon such a theme, it shall surely be that rare and perhaps unique individual—if such a being exists—who himself never faltered throughout this grisly Revolution, and whose heart, as pure as his conduct, ne'er stood in need of pardon.

Reason and sentiment could not find a more noble expression. One must pity the man who fails to discern in these lines the very accent of conviction.

Ten months following the date of that writing, the King pronounced in his declaration those words so famous and so worthy of being so: *Who would dare seek vengeance when the King grants pardon?*

He has excluded from amnesty only those who voted for the death of Louis XVI: the co-operators, the direct and immediate instruments of his martyrdom, and the members of that revolutionary tribunal which sent the Queen and Madame Elisabeth to the scaffold. Seeking even to restrict the malediction regarding the former, insofar as conscience and honour permitted, he has not ranked among the parricides those whom one may believe joined the assassins of Louis XVI only with the intent of saving him.

Even toward those monsters, whom posterity shall name only with horror, the King contented himself with saying, with as much measure as justice, that all France summons upon their heads the sword of the law. By this phrase, he is by no means deprived of the right to grant individual grace: it is for the guilty to see what they might place in the scales to counterbalance their forfeit. Monk employed Ingolsby to arrest Lambert; one may do even better than Ingolsby.

I shall observe further, without intending to diminish the just loathing due to the murderers of Louis XVI, that in the eyes of Divine Justice, all are not equally culpable. In the moral realm, as in the physical, the force of fermentation is in proportion to the fermenting mass. The seventy judges of Charles I were far more masters of themselves than were the judges of Louis XVI. There were certainly among the latter deliberate criminals whom it is impossible to detest sufficiently; but these arch-offenders had the art to excite such terror, and had made such an impression upon less vigorous spirits, that several deputies—I doubt it not—were robbed of a portion of their free will. It is difficult to form a clear idea of that indefinable and supernatural delirium which seized the Assembly at the hour of Louis XVI's judgment. I am persuaded that many of the guilty, recalling that fatal epoch, believe they have endured a foul dream; they are tempted to doubt what they have done, and can explain themselves unto themselves less than we can explain them.

These guilty men, grieved and astonished to find themselves so, ought to strive to make their peace. Moreover, this concerns them alone; for the nation would be base indeed were it to regard the punishment of such men as an inconvenience of the Counter-Revolution. But for those even who harbour a weakness, it may be observed that Providence has already commenced the chastisement of the guilty: more than sixty regicides, among the most criminal, have perished by violent death; others shall perish doubtless, or depart from Europe before France possesses a King; very few shall fall into the hands of justice.

The French, perfectly tranquil regarding judicial vengeance, must be equally so regarding private retribution. They possess the most solemn protestations; they have the word of their King; they are not permitted to fear.

But, as one must speak to every mind and forestall every objection—as one must reply even to those who believe neither in honour nor in faith—it must be proven that private vengeance is a thing impossible. The most potent sovereign has but two arms; he is strong only through the instruments he employs and which public opinion subjects to him. Now, although it be evident that the King, after a presumed restoration, will seek

only to pardon, let us, to put matters at their worst, make an entirely contrary supposition. How would he proceed were he to exercise arbitrary vengeance? Would the French army, as we know it, be a supple instrument in his hands? Ignorance and bad faith delight in representing this future King as a Louis XIV, who, like the Jupiter of Homer, had but to knit his brow to make all France tremble. One hardly dares prove how false this supposition truly is. The power of sovereignty is entirely moral; it commands in vain if that power be not for it; and one must possess it in its plenitude to abuse it. The King of France who shall mount the throne of his ancestors will surely have no desire to commence with abuses; and had he the desire, it would be in vain, because he would not be strong enough to satisfy it. The Phrygian cap, in touching the royal brow, has caused the traces of the holy oil to vanish; the charm is broken, long profanations have destroyed the divine empire of national prejudices; and for a long time yet, while cold reason bows the body, the spirit will remain erect. They feign to fear that the new King of France will deal harshly with his enemies: Unfortunates! Will he even be able to reward his friends?

The French possess, therefore, two infallible guarantees against the pretended vengeance with which they are frightened: the interest of the King and his impotence.

The return of the émigrés provides yet another inexhaustible subject of imaginary fears for the adversaries of the Monarchy; it is vital to dispel this vision. The first thing to remark is that there are true propositions whose truth belongs only to a single epoch; yet men grow accustomed to repeating them long after time has rendered them false and even ridiculous. The party attached to the Revolution might have feared the return of the émigrés shortly after the law that proscribed them: I do not assert, however, that they were right; but what does it matter? That is a purely idle question. The question is whether, at this moment, the re-entry of the émigrés holds any danger for France.

The Nobility sent 284 deputies to those States-General of fatal memory, which produced all we have seen. By an analysis of several bailiwicks, one never found more than eighty electors for one deputy. It is not absolutely impossible that certain bailiwicks presented a higher number, but one must

also account for individuals who voted in more than one district. All things considered, one may estimate at 25,000 the number of heads of noble families who sent deputies; and multiplying by five—the common number attributed to each family—we shall have 125,000 noble souls. Let us take 130,000, to calculate at the highest; remove the women, and there remain 65,000. Let us subtract from this latter number: 1st, the nobles who never departed; 2nd, those who have returned; 3rd, the aged; 4th, the children; 5th, the infirm; 6th, the priests; 7th, all those who have perished by war, by execution, or by the simple order of nature: there will remain a number not easy to determine exactly, but which, from every possible point of view, could not alarm France.

A prince worthy of his name leads to battle five or six thousand men at most; this corps, which is not even entirely composed of nobles, has given proof of admirable valour under foreign banners; but if isolated, it vanishes. Finally, it is clear that, in military terms, the émigrés are nothing and can do nothing.

There is, furthermore, a consideration which relates more particularly to the spirit of this work, and which deserves to be developed. There is no chance in the world, and even in a secondary sense, there is no disorder, in that disorder is ordained by a Sovereign Hand which bends it to the rule and forces it to concur toward the goal. A revolution is but a political movement, which must produce a certain effect in a certain time. This movement has its laws; and by observing them attentively over a certain span of time, one may draw fairly certain conjectures for the future. Now, one of the laws of the French Revolution is that the émigrés can attack it only to their own misfortune, and are totally excluded from whatever work is being wrought.

From the first chimeras of the Counter-Revolution until the forever lamentable enterprise of Quiberon, they have undertaken nothing that has succeeded, or even that has not turned against them. Not only do they fail, but everything they undertake is marked by such a character of impotence and nullity that opinion has finally grown accustomed to regarding them as men who obstinately defend a proscribed party; which casts upon them a disfavour of which even their friends are aware.

And this disfavour will little surprise those who think that the French Revolution has as its principal cause the moral degradation of the Nobility. M. de Saint-Pierre observes somewhere in his *Studies of Nature* that if one compares the figure of French nobles to that of their ancestors, whose features painting and sculpture have transmitted to us, one sees clearly that these races have degenerated. One may believe him on this point better than on polar fusions or the shape of the earth.

In every State, there is a certain number of families that one might call co-sovereign even in monarchies; for the Nobility, in such governments, is but a prolongation of sovereignty. These families are the depositaries of the sacred fire; it is extinguished when they cease to be virgins.

It is a question whether these families, once extinct, can ever be perfectly replaced. One must not believe, at least if one wishes to speak accurately, that sovereigns can ennoble. There are new families that spring forth, so to speak, into the administration of the State; which distinguish themselves from equality in a striking manner, and rise amongst others like vigorous saplings in the midst of a thicket. Sovereigns may sanction these natural ennoblements; that is the limit of their power. If they thwart too great a number of these ennoblements, or if they permit themselves to create too many by their sheer power, they work toward the destruction of their States. False nobility was one of the great wounds of France; other less brilliant empires are fatigued and dishonoured by it, whilst awaiting further misfortunes.

Modern philosophy, which so loves to speak of chance, speaks especially of the chance of birth: it is one of its favourite texts. But there is no more chance on this point than on others: there are noble families as there are sovereign families. Can man make a sovereign? At most, he can serve as an instrument to dispossess a sovereign and deliver his states to another sovereign already a prince. Moreover, there has never existed a sovereign family whose plebeian origin could be assigned: if such a phenomenon appeared, it would mark an epoch in the world.

Proportionately, it is with nobility as it is with sovereignty. Without entering into greater detail, let us content ourselves with observing that if the Nobility abjures national dogmas, the State is lost. The role played by

some nobles in the French Revolution is a thousand times—I say not more horrible—but more terrible than all we have seen during this Revolution. There has existed no sign more frightening, more decisive, of the appalling judgment passed upon the French Monarchy.

It will perhaps be asked what these faults can have in common with the émigrés, who detest them. I reply that the individuals who compose nations, families, and even political bodies, are bound together: it is a fact. I reply in the second place, that the causes of what the emigrated nobility suffers are far prior to the emigration. The difference we perceive between such and such French nobles is, in the eyes of God, but a difference of longitude and latitude: it is not because one is here or there that one is what one ought to be; and *not all those who say: Lord! Lord! shall enter into the Kingdom.* Men can judge only by the exterior; but such a noble at Coblentz might have greater reproaches to make to himself than such a noble on the Left Side in the so-called Constituent Assembly. Finally, the French Nobility has only itself to blame for all its misfortunes: and when it is well persuaded of this, it will have taken a great step. The exceptions, more or less numerous, are worthy of the respect of the universe; but one can speak only in generalities. Today, the unhappy Nobility (which can suffer only an eclipse) must bow its head and resign itself. One day it must embrace with good grace children whom it did not carry in its womb: in the meantime, it must no longer make external efforts; perhaps it would even be desirable that it had never been seen in a menacing attitude. In any case, the emigration was an error, and not a crime: the greater number believed they were obeying honour.

Numen abire jubet; prohibent discedere leges.

(The God orders departure; the laws forbid leaving.)

The God was bound to prevail.

There would be many other reflections to make on this point: let us hold to the fact which is evident. The émigrés can do nothing; one might even add that they are nothing; for every day their number diminishes, despite the government, by a consequence of that invariable law of the French Revolution, which wills that everything be done in spite of men and against

all probabilities. Long misfortunes having softened the émigrés, every day they draw closer to their fellow citizens; bitterness vanishes; on both sides, men begin to remember a common fatherland; they stretch out their hands, and upon the very field of battle, they recognise brothers. The strange amalgam we have seen for some time has no visible cause, for the laws remain the same; but it is no less real. Thus it is constant that the émigrés are nothing by number, that they are nothing by force, and that soon they will be nothing by hatred.

As for the more robust passions of a small number of men, one may neglect to occupy oneself with them.

But there is yet an important reflection which I must not pass over in silence. Some rely upon imprudent discourses, escaped from young men, inconsiderate or embittered by misfortune, to frighten the French regarding the return of these men. I grant, to put all suppositions against me, that these discourses really announce well-fixed intentions: does one believe that those who hold them would be in a state to execute them after the re-establishment of the Monarchy? One would be greatly mistaken. At the very moment when the legitimate government was restored, these men would have no strength but to obey. Anarchy necessitates vengeance; order excludes it severely. Such a man who, at this moment, speaks only of punishing, will then find himself surrounded by circumstances that will force him to will only what the law wills; and, for his own interest, he will be a tranquil citizen, and leave vengeance to the tribunals.

One always allows oneself to be dazzled by the same sophism: *A party dealt harshly when it was dominant; therefore the contrary party will deal harshly when it dominates in its turn.* Nothing is more false. In the first place, this sophism supposes that there is on both sides the same sum of vices: which is assuredly not the case. Without insisting much upon the virtues of the Royalists, I am sure at least of having universal conscience with me when I affirm simply that there are fewer of them on the side of the Republic. Besides, prejudices alone, separated from virtues, would assure France that she cannot suffer from the Royalists anything similar to what she has experienced from their enemies.

Experience has already made a prelude on this point to reassure the French: they have seen, on more than one occasion, that the party which had suffered everything from its enemies did not know how to take vengeance when it held them in its power. A small number of acts of vengeance, which made so great a noise, prove the same proposition: for it was seen that only the most scandalous denial of justice could bring about these vengeances, and that no one would have taken the law into his own hands if the government had been able or willing to do so.

It is, moreover, of the greatest evidence that the most pressing interest of the King will be to prevent vengeances. It is not upon emerging from the evils of anarchy that he will wish to bring it back; the very idea of violence will make him turn pale, and this crime will be the only one he will not believe himself entitled to pardon.

France, besides, is weary of convulsions and horrors; she wants no more blood; and since opinion is strong enough at this moment to compress the party that would desire it, one may judge of its strength at the epoch when it will have the government on its side. After evils so long and so terrible, the French will rest with delight in the arms of the Monarchy. Any attack against this tranquillity would truly be a crime of *lèse-nation*, which the tribunals would perhaps not have the time to punish.

These reasons are so convincing that no one can be mistaken; thus, one must not be the dupe of those writings where we see a hypocrite philanthropy pass judgment upon the horrors of the Revolution, and lean upon these excesses to establish the necessity of preventing a second one. In fact, they condemn this Revolution only so as not to excite against them the universal cry: but they love it, they love its authors and its results; and of all the crimes it has fathered, they hardly condemn any but those which it could have done without. There is not one of these writings where one does not find evident proof that the authors hold by inclination to the party they condemn by shame.

Thus, the French, always dupes, are so in this occasion more than ever: they are afraid for themselves in general, and they have nothing to fear; and they sacrifice their happiness to satisfy wretches.

If the most evident theories cannot convince the French, and if they cannot yet obtain from themselves the belief that Providence is the guardian of order, and that it is not quite the same thing to act against her or with her, let us judge at least of what she will do by what she has done; and if reasoning slides off our minds, let us believe at least in History, which is experimental politics. England gave, in the last century, nearly the same spectacle that France has given in ours. The fanaticism of liberty, heated by that of religion, penetrated souls there far more profoundly than it has done in France, where the cult of liberty rests upon nothingness. What a difference, moreover, in the character of the two nations, and in that of the actors who played a role on the two stages! Where are, I say not the Hampdens, but the Cromwells of France? And yet, despite the burning fanaticism of the Republicans, despite the reflected firmness of the national character, despite the too well-founded terrors of the numerous guilty and especially of the army, did the restoration of the Monarchy cause, in England, rendings similar to those which a regicide revolution had birthed? Let us be shown the atrocious vengeances of the Royalists. A few regicides perished by the authority of the laws; for the rest, there were neither combats nor private vengeances. The return of the King was marked only by a cry of joy, which resounded throughout England; all enemies embraced. The King, surprised by what he saw, cried out with emotion: *Is it not my fault, if I have been repulsed so long by so good a people!* The illustrious Clarendon, witness and upright historian of these great events, tells us that one no longer knew where that people was which had committed such excesses and deprived the King, for so long, of the happiness of reigning over excellent subjects.

That is to say, the people no longer recognised the people. One could not say it better.

But this great change, upon what did it depend? Upon nothing—at least upon nothing visible: a year before, no one believed it possible. It is not even known if it was brought about by a Royalist; for it is an insoluble problem to know at what epoch Monk began in good faith to serve the Monarchy.

Were it at least the forces of the Royalists that overawed the contrary party? By no means: Monk had but six thousand men; the Republicans had five or six times more: they occupied all the posts, and they military possessed the entire kingdom. Yet Monk was not in the position to deliver a single combat: everything was done without effort and as if by enchantment: it will be the same in France. The return to order cannot be painful, because it will be natural, and because it will be favoured by a secret force, whose action is entirely creative. One will see precisely the opposite of all one has seen. Instead of those violent commotions, those painful rendings, those perpetual and despairing oscillations, a certain stability, an indefinable repose, a universal well-being, will announce the presence of Sovereignty. There will be no shocks, no violences, no executions even, except those which the true nation approves: crime itself and usurpations will be treated with a measured severity, with a calm justice that belongs only to legitimate power: the King will touch the wounds of the State with a timid and paternal hand. Finally, here is the great truth with which the French cannot too much permeate themselves: the re-establishment of the Monarchy, which is called the Counter-Revolution, will not be a *contrary revolution*, but the *contrary of revolution*.

CHAPTER XI

Fragment of a History of the English Revolution, by David Hume.

EADEM MUTATA RESURGO.—"I rise again changed, but the same." From the latin.

The Long Parliament declared, by a solemn oath, that it could not be dissolved, p. 181. To secure its power, it incessantly acted upon the spirit of the people; at times, it inflamed minds through artful addresses, p. 176; at others, it orchestrated the sending of petitions in favor of the revolution from every corner of the Kingdom, p. 133. The abuse of the press was carried to the extreme: numerous clubs produced noisy tumults on every side: fanaticism possessed its own peculiar tongue; it was a new jargon, invented by the fury and hypocrisy of the age, p. 131. The universal mania was to inveigh against ancient abuses, p. 129. All ancient institutions were overturned one after the other, p. 125, 188. The Self-Denying Ordinance and the New Model absolutely disorganized the army, giving it a new form and composition that forced a multitude of old officers to surrender their commissions, p. 13. All crimes were laid to the account of the Royalists, p. 148; and the art of deceiving and terrifying the people was brought to such a point that they were led to believe the Royalists had mined the Thames, p. 177. No King! No Nobility! Universal equality! Such was the general cry, p. 87. Yet, amidst this popular effervescence, one could distinguish the exaggerated sect of the Independents, which eventually enchained the Long Parliament, p. 374.

Against such a storm, the King's goodness was of no avail; even the concessions made to his people were calumniated as being devoid of good faith, p. 186.

It was by these preliminaries that the rebels prepared the ruin of Charles I; but a mere assassination would not have fulfilled their designs; such a crime would not have been national; the shame and danger would have fallen only upon the murderers. It was necessary, therefore, to devise another plan; it was necessary to astonish the universe by an unheard-of

procedure, to deck themselves in the outward show of justice, and to cloak cruelty with audacity; in a word, by fanaticizing the people with notions of perfect equality, it was necessary to ensure the obedience of the many and insensibly form a general coalition against Royalty. Vol. 10, p. 91.

The annihilation of the Monarchy was the preliminary to the King's death. This Prince was de facto dethroned, and the English constitution subverted (in 1648) by the Bill of Non-addresses, which separated him from the constitution.

Soon, the most atrocious and ridiculous calumnies were spread regarding the King, to slay that respect which is the safeguard of thrones. The rebels neglected nothing to blacken his reputation; they accused him of having delivered strongholds to the enemies of England and of having shed the blood of his subjects. It was through calumny that they prepared themselves for violence, p. 94.

During the King’s imprisonment at Carisbrooke Castle, the usurpers of power applied themselves to accumulating every kind of hardship upon the head of this unhappy Prince. He was deprived of his servants; he was permitted no communication with his friends: no society, no distraction was allowed him to soften the melancholy of his thoughts. He expected, at every moment, to be assassinated or poisoned; for the idea of a trial never entered his mind, p. 59, 95.

While the King suffered cruelly in his prison, the Parliament published that he found himself quite well and was in excellent spirits.

The great source from which the King drew all his consolations, amidst the calamities that overwhelmed him, was undoubtedly religion. This principle in him had nothing harsh or austere, nothing that inspired resentment against his enemies, or that could alarm him for the future. While everything around him bore a hostile aspect; while his family, his kinsmen, and his friends were far removed or powerless to assist him, he threw himself with confidence into the arms of the Great Being, whose power penetrates and sustains the universe, and whose chastisements, received with piety and resignation, appeared to the King as the surest pledges of an infinite reward, p. 95, 96.

The men of law conducted themselves ill in these circumstances. Bradshaw, who was of that profession, did not blush to preside over the tribunal that condemned the King; and Coke acted as public prosecutor for the people, p. 123. The tribunal was composed of officers of the revolted army, members of the Lower House, and burghers of London; nearly all were of mean extraction, p. 123.

Charles did not doubt his death; he knew that a King is rarely dethroned without perishing; but he believed in a murder rather than a solemn judgment, p. 122.

In his prison, he was already dethroned; all the pomp of his rank had been stripped away, and those who approached him had received orders to treat him without any mark of respect, p. 122. He soon accustomed himself to endure the familiarities and even the insolence of these men, as he had endured his other misfortunes, p. 123.

The King's Judges styled themselves the Representatives of the People, p. 124. Of the people... the sole principle of all legitimate power, p. 127; and the indictment bore: That, abusing the limited power entrusted to him, he had traitorously and maliciously endeavored to erect an unlimited and tyrannical power upon the ruins of liberty.

After the reading of the act, the President told the King he might speak. Charles showed in his replies great presence of mind and strength of soul, p. 125. And all are agreed that his conduct, in this final scene of his life, honors his memory, p. 127. Firm and intrepid, he brought to all his answers the greatest clarity and the utmost justice of thought and expression, p. 128. Ever mild, ever equanimous, the unjust power exercised over him could not drive him beyond the bounds of moderation. His soul, without effort or affectation, seemed to be in its ordinary composure, contemplating with contempt the efforts of man's injustice and wickedness, p. 128.

The people in general remained in ㄱ silence which is the result of great passions suppressed; but the soldiers, worked upon by every kind of seduction, finally reached a state of rage, and regarded as a title of glory the hideous crime with which they defiled themselves, p. 130.

A three-day reprieve was granted to the King; he passed this time tranquilly, employing it largely in reading and exercises of piety: he was permitted to see his family, who received from him excellent counsel and great marks of tenderness, p. 130. He slept peacefully as was his wont during the nights preceding his execution. On the morning of the fatal day, he rose very early and took particular care with his dress, p. 131. A minister of religion, possessing that mild character and those solid virtues which distinguished the King, assisted him in his last moments, p. 132.

The scaffold was designedly placed in front of the palace, to show in a more striking manner the victory won by the justice of the people over Royal Majesty. When the King had mounted the scaffold, he found it surrounded by an armed force so considerable that he could not hope to be heard by the people, so that he was obliged to address his last words to the small number of persons near him. He forgave his enemies; he accused no one; he offered prayers for his people. "SIRE," said the Prelate attending him, "one step more! It is difficult, but it is short, and it must lead you to heaven." — "I go," replied the King, "to exchange a corruptible crown for an incorruptible one, and an unalterable happiness."

A single blow severed the head from the body. The executioner showed it to the people, all dripping with blood, and crying aloud: "Behold the head of a traitor!" p. 132, 133.

This Prince deserved the title of good rather than that of great. Sometimes he harmed his affairs by deferring improperly to the advice of persons of a capacity inferior to his own. He was more suited to lead a regular and peaceful government than to elude or repel the assaults of a popular assembly, p. 136; but if he lacked the courage to act, he always possessed the courage to suffer. He was born, to his misfortune, in difficult times; and if he lacked sufficient skill to extricate himself from so embarrassing a position, he is easily excused; since even after the event, when it is commonly easy to perceive all errors, it remains a great problem to know what he ought to have done, p. 137. Exposed without succor to the shock of the most hateful and implacable passions, it was never possible for him to commit the slightest error without drawing upon himself the most

fatal consequences—a position whose difficulty exceeds the strength of the greatest talent, p. 137.

Some have sought to cast doubt upon his good faith; but the most scrupulous examination of his conduct, which is today perfectly known, fully refutes this accusation; on the contrary, if one considers the excessively thorny circumstances by which he was surrounded, and compares his conduct to his declarations, one is forced to admit that honor and probity formed the most salient part of his character, p. 137.

The King's death set the seal upon the destruction of the Monarchy. It was annihilated by an express decree of the legislative body. A national seal was engraved with the legend, THE FIRST YEAR OF LIBERTY. All forms changed; and the King's name disappeared from every side before those of the Representatives of the People, p. 142. The King's Bench was renamed the National Bench. The King's statue erected at the Exchange was thrown down; and these words were engraved upon the pedestal: EXIT TYRANNUS REGUM ULTIMUS, p. 145.

Charles, in dying, left to his people an image of himself (*Eikon Basilike*) in that famous writing, a masterpiece of elegance, candor, and simplicity. This piece, which breathes only piety, mildness, and humanity, made a profound impression upon minds. Many have gone so far as to believe that it is to this work that the restoration of the Monarchy should be attributed, p. 146.

It is rare that the people gain anything from revolutions that change the form of governments, for the reason that the new establishment, necessarily jealous and distrustful, requires for its support more defense and severity than the old, p. 100.

Never had the truth of this observation been more vividly felt than on this occasion. Declamations against some abuses in the administration of justice and finance had aroused the people; and, as the price of the victory they obtained over the Monarchy, they found themselves burdened with a host of taxes unknown until that time. Scarcely did the government deign to deck itself with a shadow of justice and liberty. All offices were entrusted to the most abject populace, who thus found themselves elevated above

everything they had respected until then. Hypocrites indulged in every kind of injustice under the mask of religion, p. 100. They demanded forced and exorbitant loans from all whom they declared suspect. Never had England seen a government so harsh and arbitrary as that of these patrons of liberty, p. 112, 113.

The first act of the Long Parliament had been an oath by which it declared it could not be dissolved, p. 181.

The general confusion that followed the King's death resulted no less from the spirit of innovation, which was the malady of the day, than from the destruction of ancient powers. Everyone wished to create his own republic; everyone had his plans, which he wished to make his fellow-citizens adopt, by force or persuasion; but these plans were but chimeras foreign to experience, which recommended themselves to the crowd only by the fashionable jargon and populist eloquence, p. 147. The Levellers rejected every kind of dependence and subordination. A particular sect awaited the thousand-year reign; (1) the Antinomians maintained that the obligations of morality and natural law were suspended. A considerable party preached against tithes and the abuses of the priesthood; they claimed the State should protect or salary no cult, leaving to each the liberty to pay the one that suited him best. For the rest, all religions were tolerated, except the Catholic. Another party inveighed against the jurisprudence of the country and the masters who taught it; and under the pretext of simplifying the administration of justice, it proposed to overturn the entire system of English legislation, as being too closely tied to monarchical government, p. 148. Ardent republicans abolished baptismal names to substitute for them extravagant names analogous to the spirit of the revolution, p. 242. They decided that marriage, being but a simple contract, ought to be celebrated before civil magistrates, p. 242. Finally, it is a tradition in England that they pushed fanaticism to the point of suppressing the word *Kingdom* in the Lord’s Prayer, saying: "Thy Republic come." As for the idea of a *Propaganda*, in imitation of that of Rome, it belongs to Cromwell, p. 285.

The less fanatical republicans set themselves no less above all laws, all promises, and all oaths. All bonds of society were loosened, and the most

dangerous passions became further inflamed by leaning upon speculative maxims that were even more anti-social, p. 148.

The Royalists, deprived of their properties and driven from all offices, viewed with horror their ignoble enemies who crushed them with their power; they preserved, by principle and sentiment, the most tender affection for the family of the ill-fated Sovereign, whose memory they never ceased to honor and whose tragic end they never ceased to deplore. On the other hand, the Presbyterians, founders of the republic, whose influence had made the arms of the Long Parliament prevail, were indignant to see power escaping them, and that by the treachery or superior cunning of their own associates, they were losing all the fruit of their past labors. This discontent pushed them toward the Royalist party, but without yet being able to decide them: they had great prejudices to overcome; many fears and jealousies had to be surmounted before it was possible for them to occupy themselves sincerely with the restoration of a family they had so cruelly offended.

After having assassinated their King with so many apparent forms of justice and solemnity, but in fact with such violence and even rage, these men thought of giving themselves a regular form of government: they established a great Committee or Council of State, which was invested with executive power. This Council commanded the land and sea forces: it received all addresses, saw to the execution of the laws, and prepared all business that was to be submitted to Parliament, p. 150, 151. The administration was divided among several Committees, which had seized everything, p. 134, and never rendered an account, p. 166, 167.

Although the usurpers of power, by their character and the nature of the instruments they employed, were far better suited for vigorous enterprises than for the meditations of the legislature, p. 209, nevertheless the assembly as a body appeared to occupy itself only with the legislation of the country. According to its own account, it was working on a new plan of representation, and as soon as it had completed the constitution, it would not delay in returning to the people the power of which they were the source, p. 151.

In the meantime, the representatives of the people judged it proper to extend the laws of high treason far beyond the limits fixed by the old

government. Mere discourse, even intentions, though they had not manifested themselves by any outward act, bore the name of conspiracy. To affirm that the current government was not legitimate; to maintain that the Assembly of representatives or the Committee exercised a tyrannical or illegal power; to seek to overturn their authority, or to excite against them any seditious movement, was to be guilty of high treason. This power of imprisonment, of which the King had been deprived, it was judged necessary to invest in the Committee, and all the prisons of England were filled with men whom the passions of the dominant party presented as suspect, p. 163.

It was a great joy for the new masters to strip the lords of their territorial names; and when the brave Montrose was executed in Scotland, his judges did not fail to call him James Graham, p. 180. In addition to the impositions unknown until then and severely continued, ninety thousand pounds sterling per month were levied upon the people for the maintenance of the armies. The immense sums that the usurpers of power drew from the crown lands, those of the clergy, and the Royalists, did not suffice for the enormous expenses or, as it was said, the depredations of Parliament and its creatures, p. 163, 164.

The King's palaces were plundered, and his furniture brought to the hammer; his paintings, sold at base prices, enriched all the collections of Europe; portfolios which had cost 50,000 guineas were given away for 300, p. 388.

The pretended representatives of the people possessed, in truth, no popularity. Incapable of elevated thoughts and grand conceptions, nothing was less suited to them than the role of legislators. Selfish and hypocritical, they advanced so slowly in the great work of the constitution that the Nation began to fear their intention was to perpetuate themselves in their seats, and to share power among some 60 or 70 persons, who styled themselves the Representatives of the English Republic. While boasting of restoring the Nation to its rights, they violated the most precious of those rights, which it had enjoyed from time immemorial: they dared not entrust their judgments of conspiracy to regular tribunals, which would have ill-served their views; they therefore established an extraordinary tribunal,

which received the acts of accusation brought by the Committee, p. 206, 207. This tribunal was composed of men devoted to the ruling faction, without name, without character, and capable of sacrificing everything to their own safety and ambition.

As for the Royalists taken with arms in hand, a military Council sent them to their deaths, p. 207.

The faction which had seized power disposed of a mighty army; this was sufficient for said faction, though it formed but a very small minority of the Nation, p. 149. Such is the force of any government once established, that this republic, although founded upon the most iniquitous usurpation and most contrary to the interests of the people, had nevertheless the power to levy, in every province, national soldiers, who came to mingle with the troops of the line to combat with all their might the party of the King, p. 199. The national guard of London fought at Newburg as well as the veteran bands (in 1645). The officers preached to their soldiers, and the new republicans marched to combat singing fanatical hymns, p. 13.

A numerous army had the double effect of maintaining a despotic authority within, and striking foreign Nations with terror. The same hands united the force of arms and financial power. Civil dissensions had exalted the military genius of the Nation. The universal overthrow produced by the revolution permitted men born in the lowest classes of society to rise to military commands worthy of their courage and talents, from which the obscurity of their birth would have forever excluded them in another order of things, p. 209. One saw a man, aged 50 years, (Blake) pass suddenly from the land service to that of the sea, and there distinguish himself in the most brilliant manner, p. 210. Amidst the scenes, at once ridiculous and deplorable, afforded by the civil government, the military force was conducted with much vigour, unity, and intelligence, and never had England appeared so formidable in the eyes of foreign powers, p. 248.

A government entirely military and despotic is almost certain to fall, after some time, into a state of languor and impotence; but when it immediately succeeds a legitimate government, it may, in the first moments, deploy a surprising force, because it employs with violence the means accumulated through mildness. This is the spectacle England presented at

that epoch. The mild and pacific character of her last two Kings, the embarrassment of finances, and the perfect security she felt regarding her neighbours, had rendered her inattentive to foreign policy; so that England had, in some manner, lost the rank belonging to her in the general system of Europe; but the republican government suddenly restored it to her, p. 263. Although the revolution had cost England floods of blood, never did she appear so formidable to her neighbours, p. 209, and to all foreign Nations, p. 248. Never, during the reigns of the most just and brave of her Kings, was her weight in the political balance felt so keenly as under the empire of the most violent and odious usurpers, p. 263.

The Parliament, emboldened by its successes, thought that nothing could resist the effort of its arms; it treated the Powers of the second order with the greatest haughtiness; and, for real or pretended offenses, it declared war or demanded solemn satisfactions, p. 221.

This famous Parliament, which had filled Europe with the noise of its crimes and successes, saw itself nevertheless enchained by a single man, p. 128; and foreign Nations could not explain to themselves how a people so turbulent, so impetuous, who, to reconquer what they called their usurped rights, had dethroned and murdered an excellent Prince, descended from a long line of Kings; how, I say, this people had become the slave of a man but lately unknown to the Nation, and whose name was scarcely pronounced in the obscure sphere where he was born, p. 236. (1)

But this same tyranny, which oppressed England within, gave her abroad a consideration she had not enjoyed since the reign before last. The English people seemed to ennoble themselves by their external successes, even as they debased themselves at home by the yoke they supported; and national vanity, flattered by the imposing role England played abroad, suffered less impatiently the cruelties and outrages it saw itself forced to endure, p. 280, 281.

It seems appropriate to cast a glance upon the general state of Europe at this epoch, and to consider the relations of England and her conduct toward neighbouring powers, p. 262.

Richelieu was then First Minister of France. It was he who, through his emissaries, fanned the fire of rebellion in England. Afterward, when the French court saw that the materials of the conflagration were sufficiently combustible, and that it had made great progress, it no longer judged it convenient to animate the English against their Sovereign; on the contrary, it offered its mediation between the Prince and his subjects, and maintained, with the exiled royal family, the diplomatic relations prescribed by decency, p. 264.

In truth, however, Charles found no assistance in Paris, and they were not even prodigal with civilities toward him, p. 170, 266. One saw the Queen of England, daughter of Henry IV, kept to her bed in Paris, amidst her kin, for lack of wood to warm her, p. 266. Finally, the King judged it proper to leave France, to avoid the humiliation of receiving the order to do so, p. 267.

Spain was the first Power to recognize the republic, although the royal family was related to that of England. She sent an ambassador to London and received one from the Parliament, p. 268. Sweden being then at the highest point of her grandeur, the new republic sought her alliance and obtained it, p. 263. The King of Portugal had dared to close his ports to the republican admiral; but soon, terrified by his losses and by the terrible dangers of an unequal struggle, he made every imaginable submission to the proud republic, which deigned to renew the ancient alliance between England and Portugal, p. 210.

In Holland, the King was loved, the more so as he was a relative of the House of Orange, extremely cherished by the Dutch people. Moreover, they pitied this unhappy Prince as much as they abhorred the murderers of his father. Nevertheless, the presence of Charles, who had come to seek asylum in Holland, fatigued the States-General, who feared compromising themselves with this Parliament so redoubtable in its power and so successful in its enterprises. There was such danger in wounding men so haughty, so violent, so precipitate in their resolutions, that the government believed it necessary to give a proof of deference to the republic by dismissing the King, p. 169.

One saw Mazarin employ all the resources of his supple and intriguing genius to captivate the usurper, whose hands still dripped with the blood of a King, a near relative of the royal family of France. One saw him write to Cromwell: *I regret that affairs prevent me from going to England to present my respects in person to the greatest man in the world*, p. 307. One saw this same Cromwell treat as an equal with the King of France, and place his name before that of Louis XIV in the copy of a treaty between the two Nations which was sent to England, p. 268. (note.) Finally, one saw the Prince Palatine accept a ridiculous employment and a pension of eight thousand pounds sterling from those same men who had slaughtered his uncle, p. 263. (note.)

Such was the ascendancy of the republic abroad.

Within herself, England contained a great number of persons who made it a principle to attach themselves to the power of the moment and to support the established government, whatever it might be, p. 259. At the head of this system was the illustrious and virtuous Blake, who said to his sailors: *Our invariable duty is to fight for our country, without troubling ourselves as to whose hands the government resides in*, p. 279.

Against an order of things so well established, the Royalists made only false enterprises, which turned against them. The government had spies on all sides, and it was not very difficult to scent out the projects of a party more distinguished by its zeal and fidelity than by its prudence and discretion, p. 259. One of the great errors of the Royalists was to believe that all the enemies of the government were of their party: they did not see that the first revolutionaries, stripped of power by a new faction, had no other cause for discontent, and that they were even less distant from the current power than from the Monarchy, whose restoration threatened them with the most terrible vengeance, p. 259.

The situation of these wretches in England was deplorable. In London, they desired nothing more than these imprudent conspiracies, which justified the most tyrannical measures, p. 260. The Royalists were imprisoned; a tenth part of their property was taken to indemnify the republic for the costs of the hostile attacks of its enemies. They could only redeem themselves by considerable sums; a great number were reduced to

the last misery. It sufficed to be suspected to be crushed by all these exactions, p. 260, 261.

More than half of the movable and immovable property, rents, and revenues of the Kingdom were sequestered. One was touched by the ruin and desolation of a host of ancient and honourable families, ruined for having done their duty, p. 66, 67. The state of the clergy was no less deplorable: more than half of this body was reduced to beggary, for no other crime than their attachment to the civil and religious principles guaranteed by the laws under whose empire they had chosen their station, and for their refusal of an oath they held in horror, p. 67.

The King, who knew the state of things and of minds, warned the Royalists to remain at rest and to hide their true sentiments under the republican mask, p. 254. For his part, poor and neglected, he wandered through Europe, changing asylum according to circumstances, and consoling himself for his present calamities with the hope of a better future, p. 152.

But the cause of this unhappy Monarch appeared to the entire universe absolutely desperate, p. 331, all the more so since, to seal his misfortunes, all the Commons of England had just signed, without hesitation, the solemn engagement to maintain the current form of government, p. 325. His friends had been unfortunate in every enterprise they had attempted for his service, ibid. The blood of the most ardent Royalists had flowed upon the scaffold; others in great number had lost their courage in prisons; all were ruined by confiscations, fines, and extraordinary taxes. No one dared to avow himself a Royalist, and this party appeared so few in number to superficial eyes that if ever the Nation were free in its choice (which did not appear at all probable), it seemed very doubtful what form of government it would give itself, p. 342. But, in the midst of these sinister appearances, fortune, by an extraordinary turn, was smoothing the King's path to the throne and leading him back in peace and triumph to the rank of his ancestors, p. 342.

When Monk began to put his great projects into execution, the Nation had fallen into a complete anarchy. This general had but six thousand men, and the forces that could be opposed to him were five times stronger. On his route to London, the elite of the inhabitants of every province flocked to his

footsteps, entreating him to be the instrument that would restore to the Nation peace, tranquility, and the enjoyment of those franchises which belonged to Englishmen by right of birth, and of which they had been deprived for so long by unhappy circumstances, p. 352. They expected of him, above all, the legal convocation of a new Parliament, p. 353. The excesses of tyranny and those of anarchy, the memory of the past, the fear of the future, indignation against the excesses of military power—all these sentiments combined had brought the parties together and formed a tacit coalition between the Royalists and the Presbyterians. The latter agreed they had gone too far, and the lessons of experience finally reunited them with the rest of England to desire a King, the sole remedy for so many evils, p. 353, 353.

Monk, however, did not yet have the intention of answering the wish of his fellow citizens, p. 353. It will even always be a problem to know at what epoch he desired a King in good faith, p. 345. When he had arrived in London, he congratulated himself, in his speech to Parliament, on having been chosen by Providence for the restoration of that body, p. 354. He added that it belonged to the current Parliament to pronounce upon the necessity of a new convocation, and that if it yielded to the Nation's wish on this important point, it would suffice for public safety to exclude from the new assembly the fanatics and the Royalists—two species of men made to destroy either government or liberty, p. 355.

He even served the Long Parliament in a violent measure, p. 356. But as soon as he had finally decided for a new convocation, the entire Kingdom was transported with joy. Royalists and Presbyterians embraced and united to curse their tyrants, p. 358. There remained to the latter only a few desperate men, p. 353.

The decided republicans, and above all the King's judges, did not forget themselves on this occasion. By themselves or by their emissaries, they represented to the soldiers that all the acts of bravery which had illustrated them in the eyes of the parliament would be crimes in those of the Royalists, whose vengeance would have no bounds; that one must not believe all the protestations of oblivion and clemency; that the execution of

the King, that of so many nobles, and the imprisonment of the rest were unpardonable crimes in the eyes of the Royalists, p. 366.

But the accord of all parties formed one of those popular torrents that nothing can stop. Even the fanatics were disarmed; and, suspended between despair and astonishment, they let happen what they could not prevent, p. 363. The Nation wanted the restoration of the Monarchy; it wanted, with infinite ardor, albeit in silence, the restoration of the Monarchy, ib. The republicans who still found themselves masters of the Kingdom at that epoch then wished to speak of conditions and recall old propositions; but public opinion reproved these capitulations with the Sovereign. The mere idea of negotiations and delays terrified men harassed by so many sufferings. Moreover, the enthusiasm for liberty, carried to the last excess, had given way, by a natural movement, to a general spirit of loyalty and subordination. After the concessions made to the Nation by the late King, the English constitution appeared sufficiently consolidated, p. 364.

The Parliament, whose functions were on the point of expiring, had indeed made a law to forbid the people the faculty of electing certain persons to the next assembly, p. 365; for it well felt that, in the present circumstances, to freely convoke the Nation was to recall the King, p. 361. But the people mocked the law and named the deputies who suited them, p. 365.

Such was the general disposition of minds, when...

COETERA DESIDERANTUR. — "The rest is wanting," from the Latin.

Note to the reader: De Maistre’s Implication: He is suggesting that just as the English story ended with the Restoration of the Monarchy, the French story—which was still in the "anarchy" phase in 1797—is "wanting" its own final chapter: the return of the Bourbon Kings. —

THE END